



Alexander Kipnis



Maggie Teyte



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# *The EMI Record of Singing*

Volume Three  
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by Michael Scott

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### THE GERMAN SCHOOL

It is extremely difficult today when listening to any record of **LAURITZ MELCHIOR** (1890–1973) not to be astonished at the ease of his delivery and the power and potent assurance of his singing. It is clear to us now that he was a unique singer, the only tenor ever to realise with insolent ease all Wagner's vocal demands.

Except for 1925 he appeared every season at Covent Garden between 1924 and the outbreak of the Second World War, singing all the leading Wagner tenor parts, as well as Florestan in *Fidelio* and *Otello*. He was at the Paris Opéra in 1930 and 1931, at the Colón, Buenos Aires four times between 1931 and 1943 and at the Metropolitan, New York for twenty-four years. From 1926 he took leading parts in *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Walküre*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*. In the 1940's he began another career as a singer of light music and he appeared in a number of movies including *Luxury Liner*, *Thrill of a Romance* and *The Stars are Singing*.

When we read of the 'dry-voiced Tannhäuser' of **MAX LORENZ** (1901–1975), and of 'his hard, unyielding tone quality that did not alter much in the two decades in which he came and went at the Metropolitan', it would be as well to remember when that was written, for there are no singers of Melchior's surpassing brilliance these days and the average Wagnerian tenor now sounds like a king with even half a voice. Lorenz first appeared in Dresden in 1927 as Walther in *Tannhäuser*, but by the time he moved to Vienna in 1929 he was taking leading roles. In 1931 he made his Metropolitan debut. That same summer began his round of invitations from Bayreuth. He came to Covent Garden and the Paris Opéra for the first time in 1934. Then between 1935 and 1947 he paid three visits to the Colón, Buenos Aires, as well as singing on various occasions between 1938 and 1956 at La Scala, Milan. His repertory included Max in *Der Freischütz*, *Otello*, Herod in *Salome* and Aegisthus in *Elektra* and the Wagnerian roles of Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Tannhäuser, Froh in *Das Rheingold*, Siegmund and both Siegfrieds. He was certainly one of the busiest Wagnerians of his day.

Unlike Lorenz and Melchior, **FRANZ VÖLKER** (1899–1965), although he ventured *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*, also undertook such roles as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*. He made his debut in Frankfurt in 1926, as Florestan in *Fidelio* and then moved to Vienna between 1931 and 1950. He sang at Bayreuth on many occasions after 1933. In 1934 he was at Covent Garden, then, in 1936, with a company from Vienna, he took part in a season at the Paris Opéra. He was still making occasional appearances in Munich as late as 1952. His roles also included the Emperor in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, as well as Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin*, Siegmund in *Die Walküre* and he once undertook *Tannhäuser*, but this experience taught him to give a wide berth to the more heroic Wagnerian parts.

**HELGE ROSVAENGE** (1897–1972) was famous for his high D; if it was not effortless, it was certainly effective. His first engagement was at Parchim, North Germany in 1921, in a concert. His stage debut took place later that year, at Neustrelitz, as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. Thereafter he progressed through Altenberg, Basle and Cologne, reaching Berlin in 1930, where his repertory ranged from Aeneas in Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, Loris in *Fedora*, Raoul in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and Huon in Weber's *Oberon*, to the Duke of Urbino in Johann Strauss's *Eine Nacht in Venedig* and Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He was extremely busy throughout the thirties and forties in Vienna, Salzburg, Berlin and elsewhere in Germany. He undertook a remarkable variety of parts including the Italian tenor in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, Da-Ud in *Die ägyptische Helena*, Tamino, Andrea Chénier, Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera*, Radamès, Manrico and Calaf in *Turandot*. After the last war, however, he was particularly regarded as an operetta singer and he continued, his voice still in fine fettle, to sing an occasional Sou-Chong in Lehár's *Das Land des Lächelns* and Italian singer in Killmayer's *Yolimba*. He made a very belated U.S. debut at the Carnegie Hall in 1963.



The repertory of **TORSTEN RALF** (1901–1954) embraced a few Italian roles, but he was mainly preoccupied with the operas of Wagner. His career seems to have begun at Stettin in 1930, as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. In the next five years he travelled via Chemnitz and Frankfurt to Dresden, where he remained a principal member of the company until the middle of the Second World War. In 1935 he began his international career at Covent Garden, returning each year until 1939, singing Lohengrin, Walther in *Die Meistersinger*, Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Parsifal and Tannhäuser. Meanwhile in Dresden in 1938 he created Apollo in the world premiere of Strauss's *Daphne*. After the war he arrived at the Metropolitan, where he stayed two years, repeating Lohengrin, Parsifal and Walther and adding Otello and Radamès. He appeared at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1946 and sang again at Covent Garden in 1948, an Italian Radamès to the English (?) Aida of Welitsch and the Amonasro of Silveri.

Undoubtedly **RICHARD TAUBER** (1891–1948) was the best known German tenor of this period. His was instinctively a musical rationalisation, which is why it still appeals and why his singing is so readily identifiable. In this period operetta came to occupy an increasing proportion of his time. From his earliest years he had starred in Oscar Straus's *Die Perlen von Cleopatra*, Benatzky's *Das Märchen von Florence*, as well as Strauss's *Eine Nacht in Venedig*, *Der Zigeunerbaron* and *Die Fledermaus*. Then in 1926 he set Berlin by its ears with his first *Tauberlied*: 'Gern hab' ich die Frauen geküsst', in the premiere of Lehár's *Paganini*. After which, during the next four years, he created leading roles in four Lehár operettas: *Der Zarewitsch*, *Friederike*, *Das Land des Lächelns* and *Schön ist die Welt*. From 1930 he began another career as a film star. Upon the arrival of the Nazis in 1933 he left Berlin and moved to Vienna, where he remained a star at the opera and then went on to England. In London, where he was throughout the Second World War, as well as singing in operetta and concerts, he conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra with very great success. He was already stricken with a fatal disease when the Vienna State Opera came to London in 1947, but he insisted on making what proved to be his last appearance with them as Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at Covent Garden. This duet from *Die Fledermaus* with Vera Schwarz was unaccountably issued only in Chile.

The voice of **MARCEL WITTRISCH** (1901–1955) bears more than a passing resemblance to Tauber's. Wittrisch's debut took place a generation later, in Halle in 1925, as Konrad in Marschner's *Hans Heiling*. Until 1929 he was at Braunschweig and thereafter he became a principal in Berlin, remaining as such until the end of his career. In Berlin his repertory ranged through Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, the Duke of Urbino in *Eine Nacht in Venedig*, Max in *Der Freischütz*, Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* to Don José in *Carmen*. He appeared at Covent Garden in 1931 and at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1936 and he sang in Lohengrin at Bayreuth in 1937. Later in his career he took part in concerts and operetta – he was considered a good looking man. After the Second World War, in 1951, at the Paris Opéra, he was Narraboth in Strauss's *Salome*.

Carl Beines, the teacher of Tauber, also taught **HERBERT ERNST GROH** (1905–1982). Groh, like Emmy Bettendorf and Ursula van Diemen, was a creation of the gramophone. He does appear to have made at least one stage appearance at Darmstadt, where he made his debut in 1926, but thereafter he sang the popular music of his day on the radio, in concert or in operetta, although his records include a number of operatic titles.

**JOSEPH SCHMIDT** (1904–1942) did not make his reputation in the opera house and this was not so much because his was a small voice, but because *he* was small. His career started on records and the radio; he took part in a broadcast of *Idomeneo* from Berlin in 1928. In 1932 he made an appearance in a film, *Ein Lied geht um die Welt*, and was on the verge of another career when, early the following year, the Nazis came to power. He left Germany and undertook a variety of concerts in Cuba, Mexico and the United States, as well as Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. After failing to establish himself abroad he returned to Belgium at the outbreak of war and when the Germans invaded he was forced to flee. He died in an internment camp in Switzerland.

**JULIUS PATZAK** (1898–1974) was self-taught and made his debut at Reichenberg in 1926. Within a couple of years he was invited to Munich, which was the centre of his activities for the rest of his career. His repertory there included Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, which he also sang at Covent Garden in 1938, Belmonte in *Die Entführung*, Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Babinsky in Weinberger's *Schwanda* and Loge in *Das*



*Rheingold*, which he sang too at La Scala, Milan in 1938. He also enjoyed a remarkable success as Palestrina in Pfitzner's opera. He made occasional trips to Salzburg and reappeared at Covent Garden after the war, singing Florestan in *Fidelio* and Herod to Welitsch's *Salome*. He appeared in numerous concerts throughout his career, in Munich, Vienna, Salzburg and London, from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Handel's *Messiah* to Franz Schmidt's *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* and Martin's *Le Vin herbé*.

The sober side of Patzak's career, without any operetta, had been anticipated by **KARL ERB** (1877–1958) almost a quarter of a century previously. He was also self-taught and had created Palestrina in Pfitzner's opera at Munich in 1917. His stage debut had taken place ten years before this in Stuttgart. In 1921 he married Maria Ivogün and thereafter they undertook a partnership in many different operas. In 1930, however, he was involved in an accident, following which he was divorced from Ivogün and abandoned the stage. In the second part of his career he became a Lieder and oratorio singer. The voice on records sounds curiously preserved, the tone pure and emasculated, almost white sounding, like some cathedral treble. His art remained untouched; his interpretation of the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* every Easter with Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam achieved almost a religious standing of its own and he sang it there for more than twenty years.

1873 was certainly an *annus mirabilis*, for among the famous musicians born that year were Caruso, Chaliapin, Kirkby-Lunn and Rachmaninov, though for most of them it was not a recipe for a long life and only **LEO SLEZAK** (1873–1946) lived through the Second World War. He was one of the most prolific recording artists. He did not become a notable Lieder singer until the 1920's when he would offer compositions of Schubert, Schumann, Loewe – even Wolf and Richard Strauss. Most surprisingly, this huge-voiced tenor, whose operatic records do not always appeal to sensitive ears, has left some of the most hauntingly beautiful Lieder records.

**GERHARD HÜSCH** (1901–1984), a lyric baritone, was another important Lieder singer after the 1930's. He made his first appearance in opera in 1923, at Osnabrück, as Liebenau in Lortzing's *Der Waffenschmied*. He spent the next few years at Bremen and Cologne before arriving in Berlin in 1930. He remained a principal there for fourteen years, singing a variety of parts from Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* to Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and Marcello in *La Bohème*. In 1930 he sang at Covent Garden in the first of three visits and that summer was at Bayreuth, as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* under Toscanini. It was in 1932 that he began his career as a Lieder singer and he gave recitals throughout the world until the 1950's. He was a noted exponent of Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and his recordings of various song cycles were long considered definitive: indeed, they may never yet have been challenged.

The career of **HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS** (1888–1952) alternated between the opera house and the concert hall: he was as famous as a Lieder singer as he was in opera. His was a high baritone, of the most beautiful quality and his tones were produced effortlessly at almost any dynamic level through the entire voice. We should have to go back to Battistini to find a baritone in his sixties whose art was so perfectly preserved. He made his first appearance in 1915 at Hamburg as the Herald in *Lohengrin*; after two years spent at Nuremberg, in 1917 he arrived in Berlin, as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*. He was the leading Verdi baritone in Berlin throughout his career; he sang Germont, di Luna, Rigoletto and he was Monforte in the German premiere of *Les Vêpres siciliennes* and Don Carlos in the first Berlin production of *La forza del destino*.

At the same time he achieved an enviable reputation as a Lieder singer in programmes ranging from Mozart to Marx and he made tours, singing numerous concerts all over the world. Yet apart from a fleeting visit to Chicago in 1927, as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, he never sang in opera in America or in England: a great loss, because he was the last in a line of noble German baritones.

Whereas Schlusnus was principally a singer of Verdi, Wagner was the inspiration of **HERBERT JANSSEN** (1892–1965), and both were reputable Lieder singers. Janssen's voice was also a fine instrument in his youth, but the throaty timbre caused it to deteriorate fairly quickly and by the nineteen-forties his frequent indispositions at the Metropolitan gave him a bad name. He studied with Oscar Daniel, a leading Berlin teacher and was then engaged in 1922 by Max von Schillings at the Staatsoper, as Herod in Schreker's *Der Schatzgräber*. It did not take him long to develop a busy international career. He appeared at Covent Garden regularly every season from 1926 to 1939, singing Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, Kurwenal in



*Tristan und Isolde*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Telramund in *Lohengrin*, Kothner in *Die Meistersinger* and the Dutchman, as well as Hidraot in Gluck's *Armide*, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, Fernando in *Fidelio*, Oreste in *Elektra* and Igor in Borodin's *Prince Igor*. At Bayreuth he sang fairly often between 1930 and 1937; as well as the above Wagner repertory, he was also Donner in *Das Rheingold* and the Herald in *Lohengrin*. In 1938, after quitting Germany, he became an American citizen and made the first of seven visits to the Colón, Buenos Aires where, to his more traditional repertory, he added Sachs in *Meistersinger*, Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. He also sang Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Jokanaan in *Salome*, Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and Count Homonay in *Der Zigeunerbaron*. The next year he arrived at the Metropolitan, from which he finally retired in 1952.

**WILLI DOMGRAF-FASSBAENDER** (1897–1978) studied music at Aachen with Felix Knubben, then singing with Julius Stückgold and Paul Bruns in Berlin and later went to Milan to work with Giuseppe Borgatti. His debut took place in 1922 at Aachen as the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Thereafter he travelled via Dusseldorf and Stuttgart arriving in Berlin in 1930, where he remained a member of the company for the rest of his career until 1946. His repertory was extensive, including Belcore in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Caramello in Strauss's *Eine Nacht in Venedig* and Figaro in Mozart's opera. He sang this role at Glyndebourne and starred in a number of films. Upon his retirement he became Director of the Nuremburg Opera.

So far as one can tell **KARL HAMMES** (1896–1939) seemed to like flying as much as singing. He spent the last years of the First World War serving in the German Air Force and then began his career in 1925 at Cologne. Until 1927 he was in Berlin and that summer appeared at Bayreuth as Amfortas in *Parsifal* and Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*. From 1929 to 1939 he was a member of the Vienna State Opera, where he sang Schwanda in Weinberger's opera, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Frank in *Die Fledermaus* and took various parts in modern works, including Bittner's *Der Musikant* and *Das Veilchen*. At Salzburg he was Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*. At the beginning of the Second World War he went back into the Luftwaffe and was shot down almost at once, in an air-raid over Warsaw.

**RUDOLF BOCKELMANN** (1892–1958), like Janssen, was another essentially Wagnerian singer. His voice, though, was darker and weightier and parts like Wotan and Sachs were always favourites of his. He studied in Leipzig. In 1920 he made his first appearance at Celle. For the next five years he sang at Leipzig, afterwards going on to Hamburg. In 1932 he joined the company in Berlin, remaining there for the rest of his career until 1942. He made his first visit to Bayreuth in 1928. The next year he came to Covent Garden and returned most seasons until 1938. In 1931 he made his American debut at Chicago, reappearing there the following year. His repertory included Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, the Wanderer in *Siegfried*, Telramund and Sachs; he sang Sachs at the Paris Opéra in 1934.

If Schlusnus was the greatest German lyric baritone of this period, then **FRIEDRICH SCHORR** (1889–1953) was the most famous Wagnerian. He studied in Vienna under Adolf Robinson and made his debut in Chicago in a small role in 1912. From there he went to Graz, where he stayed four seasons, even then singing Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Sachs and the Dutchman. After a period spent in Prague and then Cologne, in 1923 he arrived in Berlin, where he remained until 1932. Here he sang many less familiar roles, including Barak in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Cardinal Borromeo in Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, Doktor Faust in Busoni's opera, Altair in Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena*, Prince Igor, Hans Heiling in Marschner's opera and, once, he even appeared as Monterone in a *Rigoletto* with Gigli.

In 1923 he came to the Manhattan Opera, New York, as Wotan, Kurwenal and Pizarro. This led to his first season at the Metropolitan in 1924 and he remained a member of the company through the next twenty years. After his last performance in 1943, when he sang the Wanderer in *Siegfried*, Olin Downes wrote the following valedictory notice: 'Other singers with as great and greater voices will appear. None will serve their art more devotedly, with a truer perception of the line that separates what is great and not so great in interpretation, or a loftier understanding of the traditions of the works he interprets.'



Like Schorr, **HANS HERMANN NISSEN** (1893–1980) was a classical baritone, for his repertory included Pimen in *Boris Godunov*, Mephistopheles in Gounod's *Faust*, Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*. His concert career began in 1920 and it was not until 1924 that he made his operatic debut in Berlin, as the Kalif in Cornelius's *Der Barbier von Bagdad*. The next year he moved to Munich where he remained throughout the rest of his career. In 1928 he came to Covent Garden and there he was a 'noble and dignified' Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and enjoyed 'a real triumph' as Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*; he came again in 1934 for both Wotans and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. In 1930 he journeyed to Chicago and sang Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Sachs, Telramund in *Lohengrin*, Pizarro in *Fidelio* and Wotan in *Die Walküre*. Also in 1930 he made a solitary visit to the Paris Opéra as Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*. At Salzburg in 1936 he replaced Schorr as Sachs in Toscanini's *Meistersinger*. Two years later, at La Scala, Milan he repeated the two Wotans and the Wanderer in a *Ring* cycle under Clemens Krauss. In December that year he arrived at the Metropolitan, New York for one season, but the imminence of the war made it impossible for him to return again. In 1943 he appeared as Sachs at Bayreuth. He sang Hans Sachs in the famous pre-war recording of Act 3 of *Die Meistersinger* under Karl Böhm.

The bass-baritone **ALFRED JERGER** (1889–1976) appeared as the conductor of an operetta company at Passau before making his singing debut at Zurich in 1917 as Lothario in *Mignon*. In 1921 he reached Vienna, where his career continued until the Second World War. He sang often at the Salzburg Festival, appearing as Don Giovanni, the Count in *Figaro*, Pizarro in *Fidelio* and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. In 1919 Strauss heard him and engaged him at Munich; in 1933 he went as a guest to Dresden to create Mandryka in the premiere of *Arabella*. He sang this role the following year at Covent Garden, where he represented with vigorous character the hearty Transylvanian bear-hunter.

Even at the present day the Balkans are made up of different races that cannot be easily separated by border lines. In Romania, for example, Elena Theodorini and Virginia Zeani both took up the Italian repertory, while Maria Cebotari and **VIORICA URSULEAC** (1894–1985) were basically German singers. Ursuleac's first appearance took place at Zagreb, then in Yugoslavia, in 1921, as Charlotte in *Werther*. Later she returned to Czernowitz, where she was born, but she resumed her career in 1922 at the Vienna Volksoper. About this time she met Clemens Krauss, who later became her husband, and from then until 1929 she sang in Dresden, thereafter travelling to Vienna and then from 1935 to Berlin. She undertook a number of Strauss's roles, including the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Ariadne, the Marschallin, Helena in *Die ägyptische Helena*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, and in 1933 at Dresden, under Krauss, she was the first *Arabella*. In 1938, at Munich, she created Maria in *Friedenstag*. In 1942, also at Munich, she was the Countess in the premiere of *Capriccio* and she sang Danae at the first dress rehearsal of *Die Liebe der Danae* at Salzburg in 1944.

The 'buffo style' suggests to us such great masters in the art of extempore comedy as Antonio Pini Corsi and Ferruccio Corradetti, but there was also a German buffo style. The comic scenes in operas by Nicolai, Nessler, Lortzing and so on were not meant to be sung literally, as written. One or two old records – those, for example, of **LEO SCHÜTZENDORF** (1886–1931) – can tell us something of how these operas were performed a half a century and more ago. Schützendorf's career began in small parts and it was not until 1909 that he appeared as Bacchus in Lortzing's *Der Wildschütz* at Krefeld. In 1913 we find him in Wiesbaden and then, in 1920, after spending some while in Vienna, he arrived in Berlin, where he remained until 1929. During those years he undertook a prodigious repertory of character parts, including Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Figaro – Rossini's, as well as Mozart's – Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, the Kommerzienrat in Strauss's *Intermezzo*, von Bett in Lortzing's *Zar und Zimmermann*, Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, the Landgrave in *Tannhäuser*, Heinrich in *Lohengrin*, Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Stadinger in Lortzing's *Der Waffenschmied*, Papageno and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Melitone in *La forza del destino*, Mephistopheles in *Faust*, a Bandit in Auber's *Fra Diavolo*, the Devil in Weinberger's *Schwanda*, Blaubart in Reznicek's opera, Caspar in *Der Freischütz*, Sebastiano in d'Albert's *Tiefland*, Tonio in *I Pagliacci* and Boris Godunov – which he considered his greatest role, an opinion that was not shared by at least one critic, who felt him more suitable for Alberich, a dwarf rather than a tsar. In his last season in Berlin, in 1929, he created Wozzeck in the world premiere of Alban Berg's opera, after which he left opera and began another career in operetta. *Wozzeck* was a fitting adieu, for within two years he was dead, a victim of melancholia. There is no sign of melancholia in his masterly recording of "O Sancta Justissima" from *Zar und Zimmermann*.



The bass **WILHELM STRIENZ** (1900-1987) was another concert and gramophone artist. His debut took place in 1922, as the Hermit in *Der Freischütz* in Berlin. Thereafter he became a student of Luise Reuss-Belce and Louis Bachner, before moving to Wiesbaden in 1923, and then Bremen in 1925. In 1926 he began a seven-year stint on the radio and after 1933 settled in Berlin, where he became a successful concert singer. He sang at Covent Garden in 1938, but earned unsatisfactory notices. He was Sarastro in Beecham's pre-war Berlin recording of *Die Zauberflöte*.

**IVAR ANDRESEN** (1896–1940), a Norwegian, had one of the outstanding bass voices of this century. He studied with Gillis Bratt in Stockholm, where he made his first appearance in 1919 as the King in *Aida*. He remained in Scandinavia during the next six years and then became a principal at Dresden until 1934. Between 1927 and 1936 he appeared regularly at Bayreuth, singing Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, King Mark in *Tristan und Isolde* and the Landgrave in *Tannhäuser*. In 1928 he sang at Covent Garden and received excellent notices during three seasons, as Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*, Heinrich in *Lohengrin*, Gurnemanz and Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and Sarastro in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. In 1930 he made his debut as Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Metropolitan, New York. He remained there two years, confirming the excellent impression he made as the Sorcerer in Weinberger's *Schwanda*. In 1935 he sang Sarastro and Osmin in *Die Entführung* at Glyndebourne. He died suddenly at Stockholm in 1940.

The career of **ALEXANDER KIPNIS** (1891–1978) was remarkable as much for his Lieder as for his opera singing. He gave concerts each year in Berlin in the early part of his career. His programmes would include an aria by Handel or Haydn, a group of songs by Schubert, Schumann or Wolf, some Russian pieces, probably by Gretchaninov or Mussorgsky and then the recital would end with a selection of operatic arias from *Simon Boccanegra*, *The Sicilian Vespers* or *Don Carlos*. At the same time he appeared frequently in choral works, the Verdi Requiem or Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, for example, – he took part in the latter on one of his last engagements in Berlin in 1933. In 1934 he sang in London, at the Wigmore Hall, and created a considerable effect. *The Morning Post* acclaimed him: 'singing in a concert hall is very different from an opera house, effects must be more delicate, more subtle. Kipnis was, however, equally successful. Above all his variety was astonishing, whether Schumann, Brahms or Wolf.' [He sang Sarastro at Salzburg, under Toscanini in 1937. In the late 1930s he went to the United States, where he enjoyed a long career in concert and at the Metropolitan Opera. KH]

Through her studies with Margarethe Siems, **SIGRID ONEGIN** (1889–1943) qualifies as a final anachronistic member of the Orgeni school of singing (Aglaja Orgeni, 1841–1926). Her prodigious range extended over three octaves. Onegin was in fact Swedish though she made her debut at Stuttgart in 1912, as Carmen. From 1919 to 1921 she moved to Munich, and at the same time appeared in recitals throughout Germany. In 1922 she made her first visit to the Metropolitan, New York, as Amneris; her reception was most enthusiastic, though she only remained there two seasons. She was also Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* and Fricka in *Die Walküre*. She sang the same roles when she visited Covent Garden in 1927. In Salzburg in 1931 she was Orpheus and in Berlin between 1931 and 1935, she undertook Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera* and Lady Macbeth. Throughout these years she was a busy concert artist.

Kerstin Thorborg and **KARIN BRANZELL** (1891–1974) were both Swedes who achieved fame in a similar kind of repertory and much at the same time. Branzell studied in Stockholm and made her debut there in 1911. In 1919 she went to Berlin and took some further instruction from Louis Bachner. After a brief sojourn in Vienna in 1924 she joined the Metropolitan, where she returned regularly until 1944. For the New York critic W. J. Henderson she was 'the fortunate possessor of a very beautiful mezzo-soprano voice which has a vein of contralto in its timbre'. At the Colón, Buenos Aires, she made a handful of appearances after 1926. She sang at Bayreuth in 1930 and 1931 and was a member of the Covent Garden company three times between 1935 and 1938. One of her last visits outside New York was to Chicago in 1940. Her repertory included Venus, Ortrud, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Erda in *Siegfried*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* and Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger* and she was also Katinka in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, the Queen in Weinberger's *Schwanda*, Herodias in *Salome*, Klytemnestra in *Elektra* and Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Occasionally too she sang Fidès in *Le Prophète*, Azucena, Amneris, Dalila and Khonchakovna in *Prince Igor*. Her records are exemplary: she is guilty of no mechanical contrivance, nor has she the hysteria of the verismo school.



Although **KERSTIN THORBORG** (1896–1970) was only five years younger than Branzell, her career did not get going for at least another decade. She made her debut in Stockholm in 1923, but it was only after a number of years that she emerged to take leading roles. She began with Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Grimgerde in *Die Walküre*, then bit part by bit part she emerged via Lola in *Cavalleria rusticana* to Fricka, Amneris, Ortrud, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* and Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera*. In 1930 she went to Nuremberg, in 1933 she reached the Colón, Buenos Aires and in 1935 Bruno Walter brought her to Salzburg, after which she secured an invitation to Vienna. In 1936 and every season until the outbreak of the Second World War she was at Covent Garden. She made her Metropolitan debut at the end of 1936: thereafter, like Branzell's, her career was principally an American business. She undertook a similar repertory though she preferred a slightly higher range; she sang Marina in *Boris Godunov* and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Perhaps it was because of her good looks that **MARIA OLCZEWSKA** (1892–1969) began her career in operetta and it was not until 1915 that she made her first appearance in opera, as a Page in *Tannhäuser* at Krefeld. After spending three years at Hamburg, in 1920 she went to Vienna, where she remained a contract artist for the rest of her career. While in Hamburg she created Brigitte in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*. In 1923 she appeared at the Colón, Buenos Aires and returned in 1928; there she sang Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Fricka in *Die Walküre*, Erda in *Siegfried*, Herodias in *Salome*, Klytemnestra in *Elektra* and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. In 1924 and 1933 she was at Covent Garden, where as well as her German repertory she was Carmen, Azucena, Amneris and Hate in Gluck's *Armide*. She made her first visit to the United States, to Chicago, in 1928. Upon reaching the Metropolitan in 1933, as Brangäne with Leider and Melchior, 'although her voice had lost something of what it once had, yet it was still opulent and glowing'. She remained in New York three seasons.

As with Olczewska so with **MARGARETE KLOSE** (1902–1968): she too began her career in operetta, in Kálmán's *Gräfin Maritza*, at Ulm in 1927. In 1930 she sang in a Wagner Festival in Paris, then the following year signed a contract in Berlin, where she remained until 1961. She came to Covent Garden in 1935 and 1938, as Ortrud in *Lohengrin*, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* and Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*. She appeared at La Scala, Milan and at the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, on several occasions. After the Second World War, in 1951, she sang at the Colón, Buenos Aires and at San Francisco three years later. In 1955 she was engaged at Palermo and that summer was also at the Salzburg Festival. Through these years she sang in a variety of other operas apart from the works of Wagner, including Orfeo, Oona in Egk's *Irische Legende*, Herodias in *Salome*, the Sexton's Widow in Janáček's *Jenůfa*, as well as Amneris, Azucena, Eboli, Carmen, Dalila and the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*.

The Hungarian mezzo-soprano **ROSETTE ANDAY** (1903–1977) was also a star in Vienna. She made her debut in Budapest in 1920, then came to Vienna within a year. In 1928 and 1929 she shared some of Olczewska's roles at Covent Garden. In 1928 she also appeared with the Vienna State Opera in Paris. The following year she visited the Colón, Buenos Aires, where she was Dalila, Carmen and Amneris. She was a frequent visitor at the Salzburg Festivals, singing Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Fatima in Weber's *Oberon*, Klytemnestra in *Elektra* and she took part in various world premieres, including Strauss's *Arabella* and von Einem's *Dantons Tod*. Her concert repertory was prodigious, embracing Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mozart's Requiem and Schmidt's *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln*. She remained a contract artist in Vienna until 1961.

**MARTA FUCHS** (1898–1974) converted from a mezzo-soprano into a soprano. Her first roles included Azucena, Carmen and Orpheus in 1928 in Aachen, though her debut had taken place in a concert in 1923. By 1930 she undertook Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Salzburg then the same year arrived in Dresden, after which she became a soprano. In 1933 she began a ten-year association with the Bayreuth Festival, singing Kundry, Isolde and all three Brünnhildes. At Covent Garden in 1936 she appeared with a troupe from Dresden in several parts including Ariadne, the Marschallin and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. She succeeded Leider as Isolde at the Paris Opéra in 1938, then three years later, in Rome, she was Leonore in *Fidelio*. In 1942 she moved to Vienna, though she returned occasionally to Dresden for broadcasts; in 1944 she sang Mercedes in Wolf's *Der Corregidor*. The following year she was in Stuttgart and remained there until 1952, when she was once again singing in concerts.



By the time of this recording **ELENA GERHARDT** (1883–1961) was unequivocally a mezzo-soprano. She remained an exceptionally busy Lieder singer in Germany until the arrival of the Nazis in 1933. Thereafter, she and her husband came to live in England and she made London the centre of her activities, appearing there regularly each season in song programmes devoted to the works of Schubert or Schumann and even Wolf. *The Times* summed up a London recital in 1934: 'when everything has been said about the faults in her singing – and there is no denying the frequent unsteadiness of her tone and the occasional lapses from true intonation – her recitals remain a fine experience, especially when she is devoted to the songs of Schubert'. Her 1929 recording of Brahms's *Feldeinsamkeit* is widely considered unsurpassed.

**LULA MYSZ-GMEINER** (1876–1948) was a concert singer and her career went on well into the electric recording period. She came from a musical family and studied singing in Berlin with Etelka Gerster and Lilli Lehmann, as well as Gustav Walter, a noted Lieder singer. She gave her first concert in 1899 and continued giving recitals until just before the Second World War. In 1924 the *Monthly Musical Record* wrote of a London recital that she gave at the Wigmore Hall: 'If she has a fault, it is that occasionally her singing is overcharged with temperament and vitality (but) apart from some hardness of tone, she gave a remarkably graphic account of songs ranging from the early Italian to Schubert, Brahms and Mahler'. At another recital she sang Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with piano accompaniment. She numbered Elisabeth Schwarzkopf among her pupils.

**JO VINCENT** (1898–1989) studied singing with Cornélie van Zanten in Amsterdam and then gave her first recital, after which she became a noted oratorio and Lieder singer. She appeared each season with Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. But, except on one occasion, when she sang the Countess in *Figaro*, she remained a concert artist. Most of her records were made by Columbia in the early years of electrical recording, but she can also be heard in a fine performance of Mahler's Second Symphony conducted by Otto Klemperer.

Louis Bachner was the teacher of **RIA GINSTER** (1898–1985), who gave her first Lieder recital in 1921. She established herself in concerts in Austria, Belgium and France, as well as Switzerland, where she lived. She sang her first extensive concert tour of England in 1931, returning every year until the outbreak of war and had an equally great success in Canada and the United States from 1934. She frequently took part in oratorios in English, including a *Messiah* at Covent Garden conducted by Thomas Beecham. She was much sought after as a soloist in orchestral concerts, appearing with Furtwängler, Walter, Klemperer, Weingartner and others. For a time she taught in Philadelphia and in later years gave master classes at the Salzburg Festival. Her Swiss recordings are very rare.

**URSULA VAN DIEMEN** (1897–?), another Lieder and concert singer, was also taught by Louis Bachner, among others. She made her debut at Schwerin in a recital in 1918. Except for Reinhardt's 1929 production of Offenbach's *La belle Hélène* in Berlin, she did not appear in the theatre. She sang in concerts and oratorios. Like Groh's her reputation was made by her gramophone records, which display a sweet, unaffected soprano voice of great charm.

By the time of this recording **ELISABETH SCHUMANN** (1888–1952) was becoming predominantly a Lieder singer, though she still appeared in opera at the Salzburg Festival occasionally and sang at Covent Garden fairly regularly after 1924 and until 1931, where her repertory included the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Blonde in *Die Entführung*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and, almost her trade mark, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*. From this time she became increasingly a recital singer. She undertook a concert tour of America with Richard Strauss and appeared throughout Europe: in Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Holland and Italy, as well as Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Lotte Lehmann wrote in an article on Schumann's Lieder-singing in the *New York Times*: 'There is not the slightest trace remaining in her singing to indicate that she was once at home in opera.' After the war, in her last years, she was appointed Head of the Vocal Department at the Curtis Institute, Philadelphia.

Coming as she did from Vienna, it is surprising to find the vocal method of **LOTTE SCHÖNE** (1891–1977) so free and spontaneous sounding. She made no attempt to invent a quantity of tone where none existed and hers was a completely developed voice, from top to bottom; it was securely based in the chest register for she was a pupil of a pupil of Garcia.



Her career began at the Volksoper in 1915. She appeared in a wide variety of operas and operettas and created Liesl in Oberlietner's *Der eiserne Heiland*. Afterwards at the State Opera she sang Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, Marie in Lortzing's *Zar und Zimmermann*, Nuri in d'Albert's *Tiefland*, Jano in Janáček's *Jenůfa*, Amor in *Orfeo* as well as Barbarina, Cherubino, Bastienne, Despina, Blondchen, Mimì and Rosina. In 1926 she transferred to Berlin. In 1927 she sang Marcellina in *Fidelio* and Liù in *Turandot* at Covent Garden. Her career continued in Germany until the arrival of the Nazis, after which she transferred her activities to Paris; she also appeared at Salzburg.

After finishing her vocal studies in Vienna **FRITZI JOKL** (1895–1974) made her debut in Frankfurt, where she remained until 1922. During the next year she moved to Darmstadt and then stayed in Berlin a couple of seasons, before stopping in Cologne on the way to Munich. There she made an important name for herself in the soubrette repertory. In 1924 she sang the Woodbird in *Siegfried* at Covent Garden and in 1926 was Despina in *Così fan tutte* at Salzburg. After 1933 she left Germany, first for Austria and later the United States.

The repertory of **ADELE KERN** (1901–1980) included Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, but generally it was not so stratospheric. She first appeared in Munich in 1923, as Olympia, though her official debut did not take place until 1924. After spending two years at Munich she went on to Frankfurt and Vienna. She sang Zerlina, Despina, Adele, Susanna, Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera* and Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She appeared at Salzburg regularly between 1927 and 1935. In 1928 she was at the Colón, Buenos Aires, then in 1931 she sang at Covent Garden. Thereafter, in this part of her career, she was heard as Baroness Friemann in Lortzing's *Der Wildschütz*, Urbain in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, Fanny in Bittner's *Das Veilchen*, and she was Adele in Reinhardt's production of *Die Fledermaus* and Olympia in his legendary *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She made guest appearances in Rio de Janeiro, Paris and Venice and continued to sing throughout the war years. She also starred in a film entitled *Frühlingsstimmen*.

One of the last so-called 'coloratura' sopranos was **MILIZA KORJUS** (1907–1980). This breed had grown up during the second half of the nineteenth century. Korjus is the perfect gramophone singer, for she had otherwise very little career but she made a substantial quantity of highly successful records. Her technique is much cleaner and generally more accurate than that of, say, Pons or Pagliughi and she has, too, a kind of style of her own. Her stage career, such as it was, began in Berlin in 1933, when Max von Schillings contracted her. She was Gilda, Lakmé, the Queen of the Night and, strange to say, Santuzza. At this time she made her first recordings for Electrola. As a result she was engaged to star in the movie *The Great Waltz*; this was a Hollywood biography of Johann Strauss the younger, and it proved a great success. Nevertheless she did not appear in any further films in the United States. After a sojourn in Mexico, where she did make another picture, she returned to the States, singing in concert and making a solitary appearance in the Met's production of *Die Fledermaus* at the Hollywood Bowl in 1950.

She seems to have had three separate careers: the first in Germany, the second after *The Great Waltz*, and the third in the 1960's, when she recorded under her own imprimatur a variety of coloratura show pieces.

After two years' study **ERNA BERGER** (1900–1990) joined the Dresden opera in small roles, making her debut in 1925 as the First Boy in *Die Zauberflöte*. In 1929 and 1931 she sang at Bayreuth: the Shepherd Boy in *Tannhäuser*, a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal* and the Woodbird in *Siegfried*. In 1929 she arrived in Berlin but it was not for another five years that it became the centre of her activities and she remained there for a quarter of a century. She undertook a variety of coloratura and lyric roles including Lady Harriet in *Martha*, the Queen of the Night, Violetta, Gilda, Olympia, Oscar and Zerlina, which last part she sang in a film of *Don Giovanni* with Cesare Siepi. Through all these years she was busy as a recitalist and she appeared on tours of Australia and Japan. After the Second World War, in 1949, she made a visit to the Metropolitan, New York, singing Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Gilda and Woglinde in *Das Rheingold*. Her recording career lasted well into the LP era.

From the invention of electrical recording the microphone became a subtle arbiter in establishing the reputation of certain artists, irrespective of what theatrical talent they may have had: **EMMY BETTENDORF** (1895–1965), for example. She began



after the usual fashion: her debut took place in 1914, as Gabrielle in Kreutzer's *Der Nachtlager von Granada*. In 1918 she went to Schwerin, where her repertory ran from Sieglinde to Martha in d'Albert's *Tiefland*, then in 1920 she moved to Berlin. At this time she made her first recordings for Parlophone. She was busy in the theatre too: she sang Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Desdemona, Ighino in Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, Carlotta Nardi in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*, Ariadne, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, Sieglinde, the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Ginevra in von Schillings's *Mona Lisa*, Dorabella, Santuzza, the Marschallin, Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Senta, Elisabeth, Nedda and Pamina. In less than a year she had recorded more than a hundred titles; henceforth the gramophone became of increasing importance to her career. After a visit to the Liceo, Barcelona and a tour through the low countries she arrived in Rostock, as Elisabeth, Donna Anna, a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal* and Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera*. By now her importance as a recording artist pushed her stage career into second place; after 1924 she made only guest appearances in opera and sang principally on the radio. By 1932, save for an occasional concert, she had retired.

**FELICIE HÜNI-MIHACSEK** (1891–1976) made her debut in Vienna in 1919, and remained there for the next six years, when she moved to Munich. There she was a member of the company until 1946, and she appeared in an extensive repertory, including a Rhinemaiden in *Das Rheingold*, Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Micaela. In 1931, she took the part of Helga in one of the premieres of Pfitzner's *Das Herz*. After 1932 she appeared fairly often at the Salzburg Festivals. Between 1942 and 1945 she sang in Vienna, and then, as late as 1953, she was the Marschallin at Munich.

Although born in Greece, **MARGHERITA PERRAS** (1908–1984) sang after the German style, for she was a pupil of Oscar Daniel in Berlin. Her first appearance took place there in a student performance, as Norina in *Don Pasquale* in 1927. Soon afterwards, she was heard by Bruno Walter, who offered her a contract in Berlin, where she stayed until 1930. Between 1935 and 1940 she was in Vienna. In 1935 she sang Constanze in *Die Entführung* at Salzburg. In 1936 she came to Covent Garden, when 'nervousness on a first appearance might account for the constricted utterance of her opening phrases (but) there were too many notes taken first then tuned afterwards'. Later the same year she was at the Paris Opéra. In 1938 she sang at Glyndebourne and appeared at the Colón, Buenos Aires, as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Constanze and the Woodbird in *Siegfried*. After the Second World War she returned to Vienna to sing Violetta and Susanna. [Her few records (including several Mozart arias) are highly regarded. KH]

**LUISE HELLETSGRUBER** (1898–1967) made her debut in Vienna in 1922, where she remained a contract artist for the rest of her career. She took the part of Liù in the local premiere of *Turandot* in 1926 and sang Zdenka in the first performance of Strauss's *Arabella* in 1933. She appeared at the Salzburg Festivals on several occasions between 1928 and 1937. After 1934 she sang regularly at Glyndebourne, 'charming everyone with her breathless eagerness in Cherubino's "Non so più"'. After she left Vienna, in 1942, she was engaged for a season at Berlin.

The power of the gramophone in establishing certain singers as international stars and favourites is nowhere more striking than in the case of **META SEINEMEYER** (1895–1929), who died at the early age of 34, leaving behind more than eighty recordings made in a mere handful of years, which helped sustain her reputation long after her death. In 1918 she was engaged in Berlin; after 1924 she moved to Dresden. She made a brief visit to the Manhattan Opera, New York, in 1923, singing Eva in *Die Meistersinger* and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. In Dresden she sang a wide repertory: Aida, Desdemona, Leonora in *La forza del destino*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, the Duchess of Parma in Busoni's *Doktor Faustus*, Manon Lescaut, Mimì, Tosca and Butterfly. In 1926 she was Sieglinde, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, Elisabeth and Eva at the Colón, Buenos Aires. The following year she appeared in Vienna and then in the last year of her life sang at Covent Garden: Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Eva and Sieglinde. *The Times* complimented 'her subtle and charming presence which combined with a voice of warm and sympathetic quality . . . (though it) is not quite strong enough . . . to come through some of the big orchestral climaxes in *Walküre*'. She made a deathbed marriage to the Parlophone-Odeon house conductor, Frieder Weissmann, who died in Amsterdam in January 1984.



Dresden was one of Germany's leading operatic centres until the Second World War. **MARGARETHE TESCHEMACHER** (1903–1959) travelled there from Cologne, where she had made her debut as Micaela in *Carmen*, via Aachen, Dortmund, Mannheim and Stuttgart. In 1931, during her first trip outside Germany, she sang Elsa in *Lohengrin* and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden. She paid her only visit to the Colón, Buenos Aires, in 1934, as Sieglinde, Marie in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, Arabella and Senta. In 1936, with a Dresden ensemble, she appeared again at Covent Garden. She was thought 'a somewhat uneven Elvira (*Don Giovanni*)', and 'was much more at her ease as the Countess.' During the thirties she sang on several occasions at Salzburg. At Dresden she was Daphne in the world premiere of Strauss's opera in 1938. After the Second World War, between 1947 and 1952, she appeared at Düsseldorf.

**DELIA REINHARDT** (1892–1974) made her first appearance as Friedensbote in Wagner's *Rienzi* in 1913. In 1916 she arrived at Munich where she remained until 1924, when she went to Berlin. In Munich she gained essential experience, as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Euryanthe and the Countess, among other roles, and she created the Empress in the world premiere of Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1922 she visited the Costanzi, Rome, as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. In 1923 she arrived at the Metropolitan, New York, and she remained a member of the company for two seasons appearing as an Italian Mimì and Butterfly, a French Micaela in *Carmen* and Sita in Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*, as well as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Elsa, Agathe, Eva and Oktavian. In 1924 she paid her first visit to Covent Garden and appeared regularly thereafter until 1929. After her arrival in Berlin her repertory increased substantially and she took part in several world premieres, including Weill's *Royal Palace*, Pfitzner's *Der singende Teufel* and Milhaud's *Christophe Colomb*. In 1931 she went to the Colón, Buenos Aires, as Cherubino, Sieglinde and Fricka. After leaving Berlin in 1935 she appeared only occasionally in recital.

It took **TIANA LEMNITZ** (1897–1994) a dozen or so years from the time of her debut in 1921, as Undine in Lortzing's opera at Heilbronn, to reach Berlin. Her progress, like her art, was typical of the period. She was at Aachen from 1922 until 1928, singing in many operas including *Hans Heiling*, *Der Evangelimann*, *Jenůfa*, *Aida*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. After that, and until 1933, she was in Hanover, where she sang Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Butterfly, Rosaura in Wolf-Ferrari's *La vedova scaltra*, the Princess in Johann Strauss's *Prinz Methusalem*, Alice in *Falstaff* and Minnie in *La fanciulla del West*. And in 1933 she arrived in Berlin, where her repertory included Sieglinde, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Elvira in *Ernani*, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Pamina and first Oktavian and later the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She appeared at Covent Garden in 1936 and 1938. In 1936 she sang at the Colón, Buenos Aires and again in 1950. In 1939 she took part in the Salzburg Festival, as Agathe in *Der Freischütz*. Her career in Germany ended with a Lieder recital in Berlin in 1957.

Details of the early life of **MARIA CEBOTARI** (1910–1949) make picturesque reading today. She came from Bessarabia; at an early age she became involved with a travelling theatre company and eventually one of its members, a Russian nobleman, married her. The next we read about her is that she had gone to Paris, then she travelled on to Berlin and took some singing lessons from Louis Bachner. In 1931 she joined the Dresden opera, where she remained until the middle of the Second World War. There in 1935 she sang Aminta in the world premiere of Strauss's *Die schweigsame Frau*. In 1936 she went with the company from Dresden to Covent Garden, as Zerlina, Susanna and Sophie, but 'her voice has too much tremolo to be appreciated'. Again in Dresden in 1940 she created Julia in Sutermeister's *Romeo und Julia*. After the Second World War at Salzburg in 1947 she appeared as Lucille in the first performance of von Einem's *Dantons Tod*. That year too she came to Covent Garden again, this time with the Vienna State Opera. She was perhaps most successful as a film star, for she looked well – she made one film with Gigli, and in another she was Maria Malibran.

**ELISABETH RETHBERG** (1894–1976) was a leading star at the Metropolitan, New York, singing there every season from 1922 until 1942. In Europe she appeared fairly often at Covent Garden and occasionally at the Paris Opéra, La Scala, Milan and the Salzburg and Florence Festivals. Her repertory included *Aida*, Pamina, both Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, Nedda, Sieglinde, Sophie, Desdemona, Maria in *Simon Boccanegra*, Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera*, Elisabeth, Agathe, Butterfly, Yaroslavna in *Prince Igor*, Dorota in Weinberger's *Schwanda*, Leonore in *Fidelio* and she created the name part in Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena*. Her records (Odeon, Brunswick, HMV and Victor) display a clean-voiced soprano with a fine technique.



Compared with the often quite strenuous gramophonic activities of many sopranos during this period **ROSE PAULY** (1894–1975) made only a handful of records. Her debut took place in Vienna in 1918, as Desdemona in *Otello*; thereafter she passed fairly rapidly through Hamburg, Gera, Karlsruhe, Cologne and Mannheim before returning to Vienna. In those years she sang Tosca, the Empress in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Rachel in Halévy's *La Juive* and Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová*. In 1927 she moved to Berlin, where she was Senta, Donna Anna, Rezia in *Oberon* and sang her first Elektra. Her career in Berlin came to an abrupt halt with the arrival of the Nazis in 1933, when Jewish artists were obliged to flee. She returned to Vienna, this time as Elektra, Martha in d'Albert's *Tiefland*, Aida, Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Kundry and Sulamith in Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba*. In 1933, at Salzburg, she was the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and she reappeared in 1934 and 1937, on both occasions as Elektra. In 1938 she sang this role at Covent Garden and Ernest Newman waxed enthusiastic; he acclaimed 'her dramatic intensity' and 'beautiful as well as commanding singing'. In the same year she was Elektra in San Francisco and then at the Met. Afterwards she appeared in Chicago, at the Rome Opera and the Colón, Buenos Aires.

If a respectable vocal pedigree were all that was necessary to make a great career, then **GÖTA LJUNGBERG** (1893–1955) was certainly well equipped, for her teachers included many famous names. She made her first appearance as Guttrune in Stockholm in 1918. Between 1923 and 1932 she was a principal in Berlin. At Covent Garden, after 1924, she took part in four seasons, singing mostly Wagnerian roles. In 1932 she first appeared at the Met with some success, but her reappearances were subject to the laws of marginal diminishing returns. She sang Elsa, Sieglinde, Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and then went on to Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, Kundry in *Parsifal* and Salome. In 1935 she was Lady Marigold Sandys in Hanson's *Merry Mount*, about which it was difficult to know whether it was her 'mangling of the text', or the composer's indifferent setting of it, that was responsible for only five performances. At any rate, after the following year, she retired.

*Musical America* hailed **LOTTE LEHMANN** (1888–1976) in her first season in America at Chicago in 1930. 'Her Elisabeth (in *Tannhäuser*) was a spiritual figure, yet infused with reality and the charm of life. Her singing was of a superb order, tonally beautiful, emotionally warm, yet always informed by authoritative musicianship'. Four years later, at her Metropolitan debut, she was Sieglinde and there too she earned golden opinions. By this time she was almost forty-six and not surprisingly the voice had lost some of its youthful beauty and limpidity. In this period she still undertook Elisabeth, Elsa, Eva, Sieglinde – even Tosca – and, of course, the Marschallin, with which she closed her operatic career in 1945. For the next six years she remained active as a recitalist. 'Everything she did was controlled by fine musicianship and strong artistic discipline. She dealt with a natural shortness of breath by taking advantage of a skilful "catch-breath" that not only concealed the breaks in phrases but was even converted, frequently, into a characteristic "Lehmann-effect" – that of a sudden heightening of emotional tension'.

One of the most successful lyric sopranos of this period was **MARIA MÜLLER** (1898–1958). She made her debut at Linz in 1919, as Elsa in *Lohengrin*. She proceeded via Brno, Prague and Munich, arriving in Berlin in 1926. Her repertory included the title-role in Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena*, Desdemona, Marguerite, Jenůfa and Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*. In 1925 she began the first of ten seasons at the Metropolitan, New York, where she sang Sieglinde, Guttrune, Eva, Elsa, Freia, Elisabeth, Oktavian, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, Dorota in Weinberger's *Schwanda*, Marie in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, Donna Elvira, Mariella in Pizzetti's *Fra Gherardo*, Madonna Imperia in Alfano's opera, *Madama Butterfly*, Mimì and Parassia in Mussorgsky's *Sorotschinsky Fair*. She appeared regularly at Bayreuth in the nineteen-thirties, as Guttrune, Senta, Sieglinde, Elsa, Elisabeth and Eva. She visited Covent Garden, the Paris Opéra and took part in various Salzburg Festivals. After the war she re-emerged in 1950 in Berlin, as Sieglinde, Ariadne in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Elisabeth.

A curious singer of this era was **MARIA NEMETH** (1897–1967); her variety of teachers included Fernando de Lucia, Georg Anthes, Felicie Kaschowska and Giannina Russ. She seems to have undertaken a prodigious repertory, from the Queen of the Night and Norma to the *Siegfried* Brünnhilde and Turandot, though she never essayed works of such diverging tessitura at the same time. It is difficult to be sure when she first started to sing. Her name appears at the Dal Verme, Milan, in 1920, as Marguerite in *Faust*, and it was at this time that she took lessons from Russ. In 1923 in Budapest she sang Sulamith in



Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba*. A year later she was given a contract at Vienna. In 1926 she succeeded Lotte Lehmann in the Vienna premiere of *Turandot*. Thereafter she took the part at Monte-Carlo, La Scala, Milan and Covent Garden. She may not have essayed the Queen of the Night at this time but she did sing Constanze in Paris and Donna Anna at Salzburg. Her other roles included Gioconda in Vienna and Tosca at Monte-Carlo. She made a quantity of records but, alas, nothing from *Norma* or *Die Zauberflöte*; the excerpt from *Die Königin von Saba* shows her voice off to the best advantage.

The career of the Dutch soprano **ELISABETH OHMS** (1888–1974) was relatively short and inglorious, for she was over-ambitious and had not sufficient resources to cope with Isolde, Kundry and all three Brünnhildes, time and again without relief, in the largest theatres. She made her first appearance at Mannheim and then went on to Munich, where she remained until 1937. At Munich, in 1927, she undertook *Turandot* in its first performance there. That autumn she appeared at La Scala, Milan as Leonore in *Fidelio* and then returned the next year as Kundry, both of these operas conducted by Toscanini. At Covent Garden in 1928 she sang all three Brünnhildes, Isolde, Venus in *Tannhäuser* and the Marschallin. She came again in 1935, adding Ortrud. Meanwhile she made her Metropolitan debut in 1930, as the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde: 'she must be added to the long list of Wagnerian sopranos who do violence to the voice nature gave to them'. She remained in New York three seasons, repeating the three Brünnhildes, Isolde, Venus and Ortrud. [Nevertheless, her few records display an ample and well-produced dramatic soprano allied to vivid powers of declamation. KH]

**NANNY LARSEN-TODSEN** (1884–1982), made her debut in Stockholm in 1906, as Agathe in *Der Freischütz*. In the next ten years she remained in Scandinavia, but after 1916 she emerged as an international Wagnerian soprano. In 1923 she sang Isolde at La Scala, under Toscanini. Two years later she joined the company at the Metropolitan, New York, where she remained three seasons singing all three Brünnhildes, Elsa, Kundry, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and Isolde. She also sang Gioconda, Rachel in *La Juive*, 'in which she was entirely out of her element' and Leonore in *Fidelio*, but in this Aldrich compared her adversely with Lehmann whom he had seen in the role in Vienna. She came to Covent Garden in 1927 and 1930 as Brünnhilde: by the second time, however, Leider had been and she was not invited again. She appeared in Paris in 1932 and was Brünnhilde and Isolde several times at Bayreuth between 1927 and 1931.

**FRIDA LEIDER** (1888–1975) was born in the period when the demand for big voices in the operas of Wagner was freeing singers from the kind of inhibiting technique of the German sopranos of the previous generation, which had enabled them, by shutting the voice down to half cock, to manage everything from Venus in *Tannhäuser* or *Norma*, to the Queen of the Night and Rosina. Leider had established herself a leading Wagnerian soprano when she first came to Covent Garden in 1924 and so she remained until her last season in 1938. In 1928 she came to Bayreuth as Brünnhilde, Kundry and Isolde. The same winter she accepted an invitation to Chicago, remaining there for four seasons. She visited the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1934 and arrived at the Metropolitan in 1933. Her repertory there included all three Brünnhildes, Kundry, Isolde, Leonore in *Fidelio*, Donna Anna, Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Mona Lisa in von Schillings's opera, the Marschallin, Senta, Leonora in *Il trovatore* and Gluck's *Armide*. Her career in New York lasted only two seasons when, for some reason, she suddenly withdrew. After 1938 she left opera and began another career as a recitalist. It was her precipitate departure from the Met that sent the management out in search of a successor and eventually they found one: a Norwegian soprano by the name of Kirsten Flagstad.

It was when she was almost forty that **KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD** (1895–1962) conquered the Metropolitan in 1935, as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. She had been singing since 1913, when she was Nuri in d'Albert's *Tiefland* at Oslo. She had remained in Scandinavia for twenty years, undertaking operetta and a variety of parts including Rodelinda in Handel's opera, Magda in Puccini's *La rondine*, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Nedda, Desdemona and Micaela and then gradually assuming heavier roles: Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera*, Minnie in *La fanciulla del West* and Eva in *Die Meistersinger*. When she replaced Larsen-Todsen as Isolde, Oscar Thompson, the New York critic, was present and came back raving about her; in the meanwhile Kipnis, who had sung King Mark in these performances, secured an engagement for her at Bayreuth. She sang Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* and the Third Norn; by the next year she had moved up to Sieglinde and Gutrune. The departure of Leider from the Metropolitan in 1934 necessitated a search for a new dramatic soprano and so it was that she came to New York, where she appeared in nine seasons until 1952, as Isolde, all three Brünnhildes, Sieglinde,



Elsa, Elisabeth, Kundry and Senta and she was also Leonore in *Fidelio*. At this time she also travelled to Covent Garden, Vienna, Chicago and San Francisco. After 1941 she withdrew to Norway, remaining there until the war ended, except for a season in Zürich, where she sang Leonore, Rezia in Weber's *Oberon* and Alceste in Gluck's opera. In the second part of her career after the war she took up most of her old parts and she was also heard at La Scala, Milan, the Colón, Buenos Aires and at Salzburg. Her last operatic role was Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at the Mermaid in London. In London she sang in the first performance of Strauss's *Four Last Songs* under Furtwängler in 1950 and her last concert took place there at the Albert Hall when she sang a group of songs by Grieg in Norwegian costume in 1957.

## THE ITALIAN SCHOOL

Although **CONCHITA SUPERVIA** (1895–1936) has been dead for well over half a century, her records can still communicate her personality as surely as the singer once did herself. They were all made between 1927 and 1933, which is remarkable – for she was singing for something like seventeen years before she made the first of them and although she made a film, *Evensong*, she recorded nothing in the last three years of her life. Her first appearance took place in a small role in Stiattesi's *Blanca de Beaulieu*, at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1910 – believe it or not, she was only just fifteen. In 1911, in Italy, at Lecce, she sang Casilda in Marchetti's *Ruy Blas* and then, at the Costanzi, enjoyed a considerable success as Oktavian; this was a rare occasion when this character, aged seventeen, was actually older than the singer, not quite sixteen. During the next decade throughout Spain and Italy and in Havana and Chicago, she undertook Mignon, Charlotte in *Werther*, Dalila, Leonora in *La favorita*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Marguerite in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* and Carmen. Her first appearance in a Rossini opera took place at Barcelona in 1915 when she was Rosina in *Il barbiere*, but she did not become a regular interpreter of Cenerentola or Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri* until after 1925. From Italy she journeyed to Paris in 1929, to the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, where she was heard as Isabella and Cenerentola. The year after, she sang Carmen at the Opéra-Comique and Rosina at the Opéra. Later, and again at the Opéra-Comique, she starred as Lehár's Frasquita; apparently 'her rolling accent (and) sumptuous costumes' proved very fetching. At Monte-Carlo, in the spring of 1934, she sang Carmen and Offenbach's *La Périhole*. Her last appearances, as Carmen, Isabella and Cenerentola, took place at Covent Garden in 1934 and 1935.

Although Supervia sang the higher and lighter mezzo roles, she never essayed Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, for it was not until the time of **GIANNA PEDERZINI** (1900-1988) and Ebe Stignani that this part entered the mezzo-soprano repertory. Pederzini studied with de Lucia and then made her first appearance in 1923 at Messina, as Preziosilla in *La forza del destino*. In the next few years in smaller theatres she sang in Mascagni's *Zanetto* and Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*, in 1929 she was Adalgisa in *Norma*, later appearing in this opera in Florence and Paris. In 1931 she reached La Scala, Milan as Nancy in *Martha* and during the next twenty-six years she undertook a variety of roles there, including the Principessa in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Charlotte in *Werther*, Carmen, Mignon, Hansel, Cenerentola, Cherubino, Conchita in Zandonai's opera, Amneris, Fedora and Rosina and in 1957 she created Madame de Croisy in the world premiere of Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmelites*. She took part in a season at Covent Garden in 1931 and at the Colón, Buenos Aires she appeared both before and after the war; in 1938 she was Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, in 1947 she sang Santuzza and in 1956 she took the part of Madame Flora in Menotti's *The Medium*.

**IRENE MINGHINI-CATTANEO** (1892–1944) was the possessor of a mezzo-soprano after the modern Italian fashion. She seems to have begun her career in 1918, as Azucena at Savona. Thereafter she progressed steadily through Giglietta in Mascagni's *Isabeau* at Brescia; Madelon in *Andrea Chénier* at the Carcano, Milan; Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at Siena; Cieca in *La Gioconda* at Parma; Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* with Stabile at Piacenza; Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera* with Bonci at the Dal Verme, Milan to Brangäne in *Tristan* at Parma and Ortrud to Gigli's Lohengrin in Bologna. By 1927, she reached La Scala, Milan, appearing as Una Madre in Pizzetti's *Fra Gherardo*, under Toscanini. At Covent Garden in 1928 and 1929 she sang both the Hostess and Marina in *Boris Godunov*. Also in London in 1929 and again in 1930 she was Adalgisa to Ponselle's *Norma*. In the winter of 1930 she actually ventured the role of Gioconda herself at Pavia, but by 1933 she was once again Cieca. She continued to sing for some years. She was killed in an air-raid at Rimini.



Quite a few not-so-old opera-goers will remember **EBE STIGNANI** (1903–1974), for her career went on into the nineteen fifties. She was a Neapolitan, studied at the San Pietro a Majella and made her debut at the San Carlo, as Amneris in 1925. In 1927 she began her lengthy reign at La Scala, Milan, where she appeared in most of what has now become the classical mezzo-soprano repertory, including Amneris, Azucena, Eboli, Laura in *La Gioconda*, Adalgisa, Leonora in *La Favorita*, Preziosilla in *La forza del destino*, Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Ortrud in *Lohengrin* and many other roles. In 1927 at the Colón, Buenos Aires she sang Hansel and in 1933 Marta in *Khovanshchina*. At the Maggio Musicale, Florence she was Arsace in the first modern revival of Rossini's *Semiramide* in 1940. She appeared in Paris, Lisbon, Barcelona, San Francisco, Chicago and London, where she made her final appearance in 1958, as Azucena. Her recording career lasted from early electric Columbias to the magnificent *Norma* with Callas.

**FLORICA CRISTOFOREANU** (1887–1960) was born in Romania and died in Brazil; her father was Romanian, her mother Italian. She spent the first years of her career singing in Bucharest in an operetta company; later she travelled to Italy, appearing in her own company – *Compagnia operettistica Città di Milano*. She was much admired in Sorria's *I pescatori di Napoli* at Genoa in 1920. In 1921 her operatic career began at the Dal Verme, Milan as Butterfly; the following year she repeated this at the Adriano, Rome and later she was Aida. But by 1927 when she arrived at La Scala she was singing mostly equivocal roles, like Santuzza, Carmen and Charlotte in *Werther*, though she ventured Strauss's Salome and created Mariola in Pizzetti's *Fra Gherardo*. She gave a solitary performance of this straight afterwards at the Colón, Buenos Aires and at the Regio, Turin she sang the title-role in Alfano's *Madonna Imperia*. The later part of her career was spent in South America.

The career of **PIA TASSINARI** (1903–1990) was plagued by her inability to decide on the soprano or mezzo repertory. As a young woman she made her first appearance in 1929 as Mimì in *La Bohème*, at Casale Monferrato. By the time she arrived at La Scala, Milan in 1932, she was singing a number of modern roles: Lalla in Veretti's *Il favorito del re*, Lucia in Zandonai's *La farsa amorosa* and Contessa Elisa in Pick-Mangiagalli's *Notturmo romantico*, as well as various equivocal parts like Margherita in Boïto's *Mefistofele* and Charlotte in *Werther* and even Mimì. Her voice was of a fine quality and she secured an engagement at the Colón, Buenos Aires, in 1946, opposite her husband Ferruccio Tagliavini, the highly successful tenor. She was with him again at the Metropolitan, New York, as Tosca and Mimì in 1947, but by then 'her voice was worn beyond (any) real utility'. In her later years in Italy she settled on the mezzo repertory, in which her voice still sounded relatively fresh.

In the period of Toscanini's tenure at La Scala, Milan, after the First World War, **GIANNINA ARANGI-LOMBARDI** (1891–1951) became one of the leading dramatic sopranos, though her career had begun as a mezzo, when she sang in a concert at the Circolo Geraci, Palermo in 1919. Her operatic debut took place as Lola in *Cavalleria rusticana* in 1920 at the Costanzi, Rome; afterwards she was Amneris, Adalgisa, Afra in Catalani's *La Wally*, Laura in *La Gioconda* and Beppe in *L'amico Fritz*. But in 1924, after spending a period away from the stage, she re-emerged as a soprano, singing Elena in *Mefistofele* at La Scala. In the next five years she appeared there regularly, as Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Aida, Donna Anna, Gioconda and Santuzza, though by 1930 she seems to have returned to equivocal roles, like the Gran Vestale in Spontini's *La vestale*. In 1926 she visited the Colón, Buenos Aires, where she was Asteria in Boïto's *Nerone*, as well as Gioconda, Santuzza and Leonora in *Il trovatore*. She was considered by her Italian contemporaries as a classical singer of the old style, the only representative of *bel canto* in her generation, for when it came to the verismo operas, the Italians preferred a kind of soprano voice that sacrificed beautiful tone and old-fashioned graces to sheer volume and a penetrating, piercing enunciation of the text.

A leading Italian dramatic soprano at this time and the successor to many of Arangi-Lombardi's roles at La Scala, was **BIANCA SCACCIATI** (1894-1948). She enjoyed a fine reputation at home, but sang abroad only occasionally. Her debut took place at Florence as Marguerite in *Faust* in 1917. During the next ten years she progressed through roles like Tosca, Manon Lescaut, Desdemona and both Margherita and Elena in *Mefistofele*, at Bari, Verona, Naples, Genoa and Rome. In



1926 she was the first Turandot in Rome and then succeeded Raisa in the same part in Milan. She remained a principal at La Scala until 1934 singing a variety of roles, including Santuzza, Tosca, Desdemona, Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*, Stephana in Giordano's *Siberia*, Giselda in Verdi's *I Lombardi* and Norma. She went to Covent Garden in 1926 and 1927, when she was both Margherita and Elena, Turandot and Valentine in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, but this production was a debacle and, not surprisingly, she did not venture abroad again. In her later career, she was Lady Macbeth in Verdi's opera at Rome in 1932 and continued to appear until 1942, in *Tosca* at Brescia.

It is difficult to decide whether **DUSOLINA GIANNINI** (1902–1986) should be considered among the English-speaking singers (she was born in Philadelphia), or among the Italians, for her voice if not her art was, not surprisingly, wholly Italian. Her father, Ferruccio Giannini, a Tuscan, was a tenor and made some of the very first records of operatic arias. Dusolina first sang at his theatre in Philadelphia in 1914, as Cieca in *La Gioconda*. After studying with Marcella Sembrich, in 1923 she made a concert appearance, then in 1925 took the role of Aida at her operatic debut in Hamburg. She sang fairly regularly in Germany, her repertory including Rachel in Halévy's *La Juive*, Butterfly, Leonora in *La forza del destino* and she appeared in these in Hamburg, Vienna, Zurich and Berlin. In Salzburg in 1935 and 1936, she was Alice in *Falstaff* and Donna Anna. In 1936 she paid her first visit to the Metropolitan; her Aida enjoyed a large measure of success 'in spite of various vocal shortcomings'. Although she came again during the next six years, she only appeared a handful of times each season. Her records, especially the charming songs, are worthy of her teacher.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest names among the Italians in the inter-war years was **MARIA CANIGLIA** (1906–1978). Her debut took place in 1930, as Chrysothemis in Strauss's *Elektra* at the Regio, Turin. She was immediately successful and engagements followed swiftly, at Genoa, Rome, Florence and Milan. She made a most impressive La Scala debut in 1931, as Maria in Pizzetti's *Lo straniero*. For the next twenty-one years she reigned the leading dramatic soprano at that theatre, a record not equalled, never mind surpassed, by any other soprano this century. At first she appeared in contemporary roles: Manuela in Montemezzi's *La notte di Zoraima*, Rosaura in Mascagni's *Le maschere*, Maria in *Guglielmo Ratcliff*, Liù in *Turandot* and Rosaura in Pick-Mangiagalli's *Basi e bote*. But after 1933 she was heard as Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*, Margherita in *Mefistofele*, Alice in *Falstaff*, Desdemona and Charlotte in *Werther*. In 1937 she visited Covent Garden and the Colón, Buenos Aires. In 1938 she sang a season at the Metropolitan before the outbreak of war confined her to Italy. Thereafter at La Scala she appeared as Violetta, opposite Gigli, Aida, Manon Lescaut, Paolina in Donizetti's *Poliuto*, Amelia in *Un ballo*, Leonora in *La forza del destino* and Catalani's Wally. After the war she returned to the Colón in 1947 and 1948, as Norma and Adriana Lecouvreur. In 1950 she came to Covent Garden with the Scala company and then, back in Milan, she took various parts in different revivals, including Fedora, Leonora in Verdi's *Oberto* and Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*.

Another wholly Italian soprano of this time was **LINA BRUNA RASA** (1907–1984). Her first appearance was at Treviso in 1926, as Elena in *Mefistofele*; the following year, in the same part, she arrived at La Scala, Milan. Thereafter she returned regularly until 1936, appearing as Dolly in Wolf-Ferrari's *Sly*, Cecilia in Vittadini's *La Sagredo*, Maddalena in Michetti's *La Maddalena* and Zarina Mitrissa in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar Saltan*. Under Respighi's direction she sang Magda in his *La campana sommersa* and with Toscanini she was Ricke in a revival of Franchetti's *Gennania*. In 1929 she sang Tosca at the Colón, Buenos Aires and in 1931 appeared at Monte-Carlo as Leonora in *Il trovatore*. She returned to La Scala in 1940 to take part in a special commemorative concert held on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the first performance of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*. Illness obliged her to retire early.

Though born in Paris **GINA CIGNA** (b.1900) was Caniglia's principal Italian rival during this period. She took instruction from Calvé, Darclée, Storchio and Lucette Korsoff. Her career began at the top; she was engaged at La Scala, Milan, as Freia in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* in 1928. She returned there at the end of that year and reappeared almost every season until 1945. She sang Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, Abigaille in *Nabucco*, Aida, Gioconda, Isabeau in Mascagni's opera, Violetta, Turandot, Leonora in *La forza del destino*, Jefelete in Ponchielli's *Il figliuol prodigo*, Wally, Anaide in Rossini's *Mosé*, Elvira in *Ernani*, Francesca da Rimini in Zandonai's opera, Alaide in Bellini's *La straniera*,



Tosca, Asteria in Boïto's *Nerone* and Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera*. During the thirties she travelled abroad widely, appearing at the Colón, Buenos Aires, Covent Garden, the Paris Opéra, Chicago and the Metropolitan, New York – where Farrar hailed her as Ponselle's successor, but whether that was a compliment or a slap in the face for Ponselle is not easy to be sure. Her career came to an abrupt conclusion as a result of an automobile accident in Italy in 1947.

The career of **IVA PACETTI** (1898–1981) was somewhat overshadowed by both Maria Caniglia and Gina Cigna. She made her debut at Prato in 1920, then spent a couple of seasons at Genoa. She took the part of Elena in *Mefistofele* at La Scala, Milan in 1922 but she did not return until 1927. Thereafter she became a regular member of the company: she sang Leonora in *La forza del destino* and *Il trovatore*, Aida, Donna Anna, Santuzza, Turandot, Tosca, Manon Lescaut, Leonora in *Fidelio* and Fedora, as well as Ariane in Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, Camille Orazi in Porrino's *Gli Orazi* and her final appearance was as Costanze in Cherubini's *Les deux Journées* in 1942. She was a member of the company at Covent Garden on four occasions after 1930. She took part in a special spring season at the Colón, Buenos Aires also in 1930 and then appeared briefly at Chicago in the autumn of 1931. In 1936 she undertook Norma at Monte-Carlo.

One of Italy's most beloved sopranos was an Irishwoman. Unlike the English-speaking sopranos of her day **MARGARET SHERIDAN** (1889–1958) sang after the Italian fashion. Her career began in 1911, when Margaret Burke-Sheridan, as she was, sang the soprano part in Handel's *Messiah* at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Her stage career, however, did not begin until 1919, as Mimì in *La Bohème*, at the Costanzi, Rome. After a brief trip to London that summer, she returned to Italy as Butterfly at the Dal Verme, Milan. In the course of the next few years she appeared at the Filodrammatici, Rome, the San Carlo, Naples and at Monte-Carlo. In 1922 at La Scala, Milan, she was Wally in Catalani's opera, thereafter she sang Anna Maria in Riccitelli's *I compagnacci* and Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*. She came again to Covent Garden between 1925 and 1930, as Liù in *Turandot*, Desdemona in *Otello*, Manon Lescaut and Mimì. In 1931 she retired and later taught in Dublin. She sang the title role in the first electrical recording of *Madama Butterfly*, but our selection is an earlier, unpublished version of the death scene, with the Australian tenor **Browning Mummery**.

Like Sheridan **ROSETTA PAMPANINI** (1896–1973) was also a lyric soprano. Her first appearance took place in 1920, at the Nazionale, Rome, as Micaela in *Carmen*. She made appearances subsequently at the Regio, Turin, as Siebel in *Faust*, at the San Carlo, Naples, as Desdemona in *Otello* and at the Comunale, Bologna, as Mimì in *La Bohème*. At the end of 1925 she arrived at La Scala, Milan where she sang a number of different parts: Butterfly, Iris, Sonia in Pedrollo's *Delitto e castigo*, Nedda, Manon Lescaut, Liù, Elsa, Thien-Hoa in Bianchini's opera and Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*. When the Scala company visited Berlin in 1929 she repeated her Butterfly and Manon Lescaut. She sang at the Colón, Buenos Aires, Monte-Carlo, Covent Garden, Genoa, Vienna, Turin, Paris and Chicago. Her repertory remained the same until after 1937, by which time she was adding Leonora in *La forza del destino* and Aida. After 1942 she taught in Milan.

**CLAUDIA MUZIO** (1889–1936) was a great beauty. The unique and characteristic quality of her voice – once heard it is not soon forgotten – the unquestioned sincerity of her style and manner, her lonely and unhappy private life with its broken romances that led to an early death, are the stuff of which legends are compounded. They deeply affected her contemporaries and over the passage of years her reputation seems actually to have grown, even in those centres where she appeared comparatively infrequently, or not at all. Undoubtedly the principal factor in this has been the almost continuous availability of a small but remarkably successful group of recordings that she made in the last years of her life. Notwithstanding her failing powers they represent the best of Muzio. They are her most characteristic performances; anyone who hears them for the first time cannot fail to be struck by the idiomatic quality of her singing and her intelligent phrasing. Probably no other singer so perfectly represents the era in which she lived. She recorded acoustically for Edison and Pathé but her most famous recordings were made for EMI/Columbia in the early thirties.

She sang only two more seasons after 1928 at the Colón, Buenos Aires. She returned to Chicago regularly until 1932 and the same year created Refice's Cecilia at the Rome Opera. In 1934 she appeared in two performances of *La traviata* at the Metropolitan, New York.



Although the Argentinian soprano **HINA SPANI** (1896–1969) never visited North America or Great Britain, she enjoyed a highly successful career through nearly a quarter of a century in Argentina, Australia, Spain and Italy. Her debut took place at La Scala, Milan in 1915, as Anna in Catalani's *Loreley*. The First World War obliged her to spend most of her time at home, at Buenos Aires. At the Colón she was Micaela in *Carmen*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Inès in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, Donna Elvira, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Margherita and Elena in *Mefistofele* and Samaritana in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*. After 1919 she returned to Italy again, singing at Turin, Rome, Parma, Ravenna, Naples, Bergamo and Milan a steadily more dramatic repertory: Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust*, Wally, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, Aida, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* and Sieglinde. Throughout her career she gave song recitals with programmes embracing music from *arie antiche* to Vittorio Gui's *Cantico dei cantici*. She made concert tours throughout Spain, Switzerland, Australia and Chile. Her operatic career continued into the 1930's, by which time she was undertaking roles like Marina in *Boris Godunov*, Donna Anna, Leonora in Verdi's *Oberto* and Lady Macbeth.

A leading lyric soprano born before most of the other singers in this volume and who busied herself almost entirely with the verismo repertory, **MARIA FARNETI** (1877–1955), nevertheless did not make her few recordings until some time after she had retired. She made her debut in 1899, at the Regio, Turin, as Desdemona in *Otello*. Throughout her career she was Cilea's Gloria, Vivetta in *I'Arlesiana* and Adriana Lecouvreur, Catalani's Wally and Edmea, Mascagni's Iris, Colombina in *Le maschere* and Suzel in *L'amico Fritz*, Giordano's Madame Sans-Gêne and Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier* and Puccini's Butterfly and Magda in *La rondine*. In the course of twenty years she went the rounds of many leading Italian theatres: the Verdi, Trieste, the San Carlo, Naples, the Carlo Felice, Genoa, the Costanzi, Rome and the Dal Verme, Milan; she travelled abroad to the Colón and also the Coliseo, Buenos Aires, where she created Mascagni's Isabeau. Her other roles included Donna Elvira and Elsa.

**MARIA ZAMBONI** (1895–1976) had a short but successful career. She created Liù in the world premiere of *Turandot* at La Scala, Milan in 1926 and she was the first Maria in Pizzetti's *Lo straniero* in Rome in 1930. Her first appearance took place in 1920 at Piacenza as Marguerite in *Faust*. Within a year she spent a season at the Colón, Buenos Aires, singing Margherita in *Mefistofele*, Anna Maria in Riccitelli's *I compagnacci* and Nannetta in *Falstaff*. In 1925 she reached La Scala, Milan, where she remained until 1931; under Toscanini she was Manon Lescaut, Euridice in Gluck's *Orfeo*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, then, with Bruno Walter, Donna Elvira and she sang Mimì on three separate occasions. She retired in 1934.

**MAFALDA FAVERO** (1903–1981) was an essentially lyric soprano of this period. She made her debut at the Regio, Parma, in 1927 as Liù in *Turandot*, in the first performances of the opera heard at that theatre; she was also Elsa and Marguerite in *Faust*. Only a couple of seasons later she was invited to La Scala, Milan and began a twenty-year career there. Her repertory included Zerlina, Mimì, Manon, Lady Harriet in Flotow's *Martha*, Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, Louise in Charpentier's opera, Carolina in Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, Micaela, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, Suzel in *L'amico Fritz*. Elsewhere in Italy she created parts in Mascagni's *Pinotta* and Wolf-Ferrari's *Il campiello* and she was heard as Madelon in Lattuada's *Le preziose ridicole*, Gabriella in Zandonai's *La via della finestra* and Colombina in Pick-Mangiagalli's *Base e bote*. She appeared at Covent Garden as Liù and Norina in 1937 and in 1939 she was Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. In 1938 she sang a couple of performances of Mimì at the Metropolitan. She remained a principal at La Scala until 1949.

Although she became far better known in the United States and continued to sing in New York well into the sixties, **LICIA ALBANESE** (b.1913) made her first appearance at Bari in 1934 as Mimì in *La Bohème*. By the beginning of 1935 she had reached La Scala, Milan, as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. In the course of the next four years she was Anna in *Loreley*, Suzel in *L'amico Fritz*, Micaela and Mimì and she returned after the war, in 1951, as Butterfly. At Covent Garden in 1937 she succeeded Favero as Liù and was also Nannetta in *Falstaff*. Her career at the Metropolitan began in 1940 with Butterfly; thereafter she appeared in a host of different parts: as Marguerite in *Faust*, Giorgetta in *Il tabarro*, Anne in *Falstaff*, Manon, Manon Lescaut, Violetta, Tosca, Liù, Adriana Lecouvreur, Susanna but, in 1956, 'she ventured beyond her depth as the Countess'.



Only yesterday, as it seems, **MAGDA OLIVERO** (b.1910) was still singing (in fact, she was able to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of her debut and the opening of a Magda Olivero museum in September 1983 by giving a full-length recital). She preserved the verismo style more completely than any other artist and she had been active, save for a nine-year period of refinement in the 1940's, for almost half a century. Her career began in Turin, her home town, in 1933, as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. Later that year she was engaged at La Scala, Milan for small roles – she sang Anna in *Nabucco* and Ines in *La favorita*. During the next eight years in Italy she undertook many leading lyric soprano parts, including Liù in *Turandot*, Mimì, Sakuntala in Alfano's *La leggenda di Sakuntala*, Mariella in Giordano's opera, *Butterfly*, Marguerite in *Faust* and Cilea's Adriana Lecouvreur. It was in fact Cilea who encouraged her to make a come-back in 1950, as Adriana Lecouvreur. She sang Liù to Cigna's *Turandot* in the first complete recording of Puccini's last opera, from which our excerpt is taken.

**BIDÙ SAYÃO** (b.1902–1999), a Brazilian, made her first concert appearance in Bucharest, Romania in 1921; at the time she was a pupil of the Romanian soprano, Elena Theodorini, who had been teaching in Rio de Janeiro. After some further study with Jean de Reszke she made her operatic debut at the Costanzi, Rome, as Rosina in *Il barbiere* in 1926, which she followed with Gilda and Carolina in *Il matrimonio segreto*. At this time she married Walter Mocchi, an international impresario, who arranged for her to sing in Brazil, at Rio de Janeiro. In the next five years she was busy in Lisbon, Rome, Turin and Buenos Aires. She appeared in the 1929 season at the Colón, as Gilda, Rosalina in Giordano's *Il re*, Lucia and Rosina. The following year she sang Juliette and Gilda in Paris and Rosina at La Scala, Milan. When she returned to Rio in 1936 she earned a great success as Cecy in Gomes's *Il Guarany*. From this time she began gradually to relinquish her roles of Lucia and Lakmé and replace them - as she did at the Metropolitan, where she made her first appearance in 1937 – with Zerlina, Adina, Susanna, Violetta and Norina (though she still occasionally undertook Rosina); for her second husband, the baritone Giuseppe Danise, always insisted that she sing light roles.

**CONCHITA BADIA** (1897–1975) was a noted singer of Spanish songs. In the golden age of Spanish *canciones* she worked closely with Manuel de Falla and Enrique Granados, several of whose songs are dedicated to her. Occasionally she appeared in opera: she sang in Granados's *Maria del Carmen* at the Liceo, Barcelona, shortly after his untimely death in 1916. In her later years she worked with leading Spanish pianists, including Ricardo Viñes and Alicia de Larrocha, as well as singers like Montserrat Caballé.

**ADELAIDE SARACENI** (1895–1995) was an Argentinian and made her debut in 1920 at Lugo di Romagna as Rosina in *Il barbiere*. Eight years later she sang at La Scala, Milan and returned there regularly until 1932. She also went to the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1928. At the beginning of her career she undertook Lucia, Rosina, Gilda and Violetta, but by degrees she added Susanna in *Figaro*, Norina in *Don Pasquale* (which she recorded with Tito Schipa), Lady Harriet in *Martha*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, Marguerite in *Faust* and even Manon Lescaut, Alice in *Falstaff* and Adriana Lecouvreur. She was also the first Rosaura in Wolf-Ferrari's *La vedova scaltra* and Rautendelein in Respighi's *La campana sommersa*, both of which she created at La Scala. In Rome she sang Eunomia in Lualdi's *Il diavolo nel campanile* and Ginevra in Giordano's *La cena delle beffe*. At the Verona Arena in 1933 she was the Queen in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*.

Saraceni and **MERCEDES CAPSIR** (1897–1969) were both typical singers of this time and both made complete opera recordings more than fifty years ago. Capsir first appeared at the Liceo, Barcelona, as Gilda in 1914. After singing in Madrid and Lisbon, in 1916 she arrived at the Colón, Buenos Aires, where she was Ophelia (to Ruffo's Hamlet) and Gilda and took part in a solitary *Rigoletto* in 1920. In Monte-Carlo in 1923 she was Gilda and Rosina and also Lady Harriet in *Martha* and Musetta in *La Bohème*. After performances in Rome, Bologna and the Dal Verme, Milan, she reached La Scala, singing Gilda, Rosina and Rosalina in Giordano's *Il re*. Her career was still going on at Barcelona in 1946, when she added Mimì and *Butterfly* to her repertory. She is best known on records for her Rosina and Gilda in Columbia's recordings of *Il barbiere* and *Rigoletto* with Stracciari and Borgioli.



Although they were both coloratura sopranos Capsir's repertory remained frozen and consisted mainly of endless Rosinas and Gildas, whereas **TOTI DAL MONTE** (1892–1976) spent at least the first six years of her career searching out a new repertory. Her debut took place at La Scala, Milan in 1916, as Biancofiore in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*. Subsequently in Italy she sang Lola in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Lisette in Puccini's *La rondine*, Anna in Catalani's *Loreley*, Argelia in his *Dejanice*, Lodoletta in Mascagni's opera and Butterfly, as well as Leila in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, Gilda and Amina in *La sonnambula*. After 1922 at La Scala she undertook Amina, Lucia, Rosina, Linda, Norina in *Don Pasquale* and Rosalina in Giordano's *Il re*; her career continued there until 1939. She sang at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1923 and 1927. In 1925 she came to Covent Garden for a couple of Rosinas and a solitary Lucia – the only one in London between Tetrizzini in 1909 and Sutherland half a century later. She was not a success there, nor at the Metropolitan, New York in the same year when she repeated her Lucia. In Chicago, however, she returned for four seasons. In 1928 she made a trip to Australia. Her post-war concert appearances in London were not a success. In 1939 she recorded *Madama Butterfly* with Gigli – possibly the only recording in which Cio-Cio-San sounds like a young girl.

Though born in New York **LINA PAGLIUGH** (1907–1980) was an Italian. In fact, she was the last Italian coloratura soprano, part of a tradition that extends back via Dal Monte, Galli-Curci and Tetrizzini, to Patti. Pagliugh's first appearance took place in 1927, as Gilda in *Rigoletto* at the Nazionale, Milan. In the course of the next few seasons she showed off most of her repertory, singing Gilda, Lucia and Rosina all over Italy. She went on tours of Australia and South America and came to Covent Garden in 1938. Her repertory did include some other roles: Violetta, Amina, Elvira in *I puritani*, Cecy in Gomes's *Il Guarany*, Sinaïde in Rossini's *Mosé* and The Queen of the Night. She took part in broadcasts of many different works: Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony, Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* and *L'elisir d'amore*, Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Perosi's *La risurrezione di Lazzaro*, Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Wagner's *Parsifal* – she was the First Flower Maiden to Callas's Kundry – as well as operettas: Zandonai's *Il bacio*, Suppé's *Boccaccio*, Lecoq's *La Fille de Mme Angot*, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Leoncavallo's *La reginetta delle rose*. HMV showed considerable enterprise in engaging her for the role of Gilda in the first complete electrical recording of *Rigoletto* in 1927.

**EZIO PINZA** (1892–1957) was one of the most dashing and handsome men of his day and the possessor of a nobly beautiful *basso cantante*. He first sang in a concert organised by his teacher, Alessandro Vezzani, at the Liceo, Bologna in 1913; he appeared in the second act of *La forza del destino* and the fifth act of *Faust*. The next year he undertook Oroveso in *Norma* at Sorcino – a small town almost equidistant from Cremona, Brescia and Milan. After a break caused by the First World War, until 1938 he sang throughout Italy and especially at La Scala, Milan, as Ferrando in *Il trovatore*, Padre Guardiano in *La forza del destino*, Alvise in *La Gioconda*, Giorgio in *I puritani*, Mefistofele in Boïto's opera and in Gounod's *Faust*, Rodolfo in *La sonnambula*, Colline in *La Bohème* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and he undertook a variety of Wagnerian roles in Italian. In 1926 he arrived at the Metropolitan, New York, which remained the centre of his activities throughout the rest of his career. There his repertory ran the gamut from Archibaldo in *L'arnore dei tre re*, Il Cieco in Mascagni's *Iris*, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* and Boris Godunov, to Basilio in *Il barbiere*, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Escamillo and Don Giovanni. This part became one of his most celebrated impersonations and he continued to sing it through the last war, even 'when his vocal gifts were on the decline'. He quit opera in 1948 and took up another career in films and musicals, including *South Pacific* and *Fanny*. He recorded Verdi's Requiem twice (1929 and 1939); our selection is from the former.

**TANCREDI PASERO** (1892–1983) was almost the same age as Pinza and his career also took him to New York, Buenos Aires and London, yet he returned to La Scala and remained the principal bass there for more than a quarter of a century. His voice was a remarkably fine instrument but he did not have the personality to embrace parts like Don Giovanni. His debut took place at Vicenza in 1917, as Rodolfo in *La sonnambula*. In 1924 he reached the Colón, Buenos Aires, where as well as Ramfis, Roucher in *Andrea Chénier*, Il Cieco in *Iris*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, he was also Colline in *La Bohème*, Il Padre Guardiano in *La forza del destino*, Basilio in *Il barbiere* and Oroveso in *Norma*. These roles he also sang after his arrival at La Scala, Milan in 1926. In the next twenty-five years he increased his repertory to include Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, Ferrando in *Il trovatore*, Silva in *Ernani*, Philip II in *Don Carlo*, Henry the Fowler in *Lohengrin*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*,



Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, the Wanderer in *Siegfried*, Hagen in *Götterdämmerung* and Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*. He came to the Metropolitan in 1929, where he sang Don Pedro and the Grand Inquisitor and the Grand Brahmin in *L'Africaine*, Win-Shee in Leoni's *L'oracolo*, Walter in *Luisa Miller* and Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*. In 1931 he appeared at Covent Garden as Il Padre Guardiano.

If **NAZZARENO DE ANGELIS** (1881–1962) seems a trifle old to be included here the fault lies with the gramophone: he made some records when his art was immature, between 1905 and 1909 and no more until after the introduction of electrical recording, in 1929. He was one of those Italian basses, from Navarini to Pasero, who remained at La Scala, Milan almost his entire career. He made his debut in his hometown of Aquila, as Il Poclestà in *Linda di Chamounix*, in 1903. Thereafter he sang Baldassare in *La favorita*, Silva in *Ernani*, Basilio in *Il barbiere* and Oroveso in *Norma* before he reached La Scala in 1907, as Alvisé in *La Gioconda*. In the course of the next quarter of a century he got through a substantial repertory, including Ramfis, Il Pedone in Catalani's *La Wally*, Aquilante de' Bardi in Cilea's *Gloria*, Rolando in Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*, the High Priest in Spontini's *La vestale*, Procida in I *vespri siciliani*, Philip II in *Don Carlo*, Henry in *Lohengrin*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, Archibaldo in *L'amore dei tre re*, Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*, Wotan, Hagen, Rossini's Mosè and Boïto's Mefistofele. Though their characterisations may have been totally different, yet these last two very disparate roles became his *cartes de visite* and he sang them in Florence, Rome, Trieste, Verona, Turin and Bergamo. Although he did not appear in the United States he made three visits to the Colón, Buenos Aires, repeating many of the above mentioned parts and also adding Ashby in *La fanciulla del West*, Fra Lorenzo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and Mefistopheles in *Faust*. He was still singing at Verona in 1939.

**SALVATORE BACCALONI** (1900–1969), who comes from the next generation after de Angelis, on his early recordings sings the text literally and without the extemporaneous wit of the best buffos of the previous generation and by, the end of the Second World War, his performances deteriorated to the point of shameless mugging. He was a pupil of Kaschmann (who in the later part of his career became a buffo singer) and made his debut at the Adriano, Rome in 1922 as Bartolo in *Il barbiere*. Thereafter he appeared at many leading Italian theatres. He reached La Scala, in 1926 and remained on the roster of artists for another twenty-seven years in a wide variety of parts: as the King in *Aida* (he recorded this role, too), Fernando in *Fidelio*, Geronte in *Manon Lescaut*, before undertaking Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*. After 1930 he sang eleven seasons at the Colón, Buenos Aires, where he ranged through Benoît and Alcindoro in *La Bohème*, Geronimo in *Il matrimonio segreto*, Kovatsky in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* and Il Ciabattino in Casavola's *Il gobbo del califfo*. In 1940 he made his first appearance at the Metropolitan, New York, remaining there for the rest of his career until 1962, singing the traditional repertory. He made visits to Glyndebourne (his Leporello was superb), Covent Garden, Salzburg and Chicago. After he retired from opera there was a Hollywood postscript to his career.

Although **AFRO POLI** (1901–1988) was from the same generation as Baccaloni yet he took part in a complete recording of *Don Pasquale* with the much older Badini, singing Malatesta to Badini's Don Pasquale. He does not seem to have made his debut until 1930 at Pisa as Germont in *La traviata*. From 1937 until 1945 he was a house baritone at La Scala, Milan, where his repertory was typical of the time: Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Robinson in Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, Zurga, Albert in *Werther*, Alberich, Marcello in *La Bohème* and a variety of other then new roles: Pedro in Wolf-Ferrari's *La dama boba*, Matteo in Busoni's *Arlecchino*, Paquiro in Granados's *Goyescas* and Kemala in Dönisch's *Soleida*. He appeared at various capital cities, including Rome, Lisbon and London, where he took part in the seasons of Italian opera held at the Cambridge Theatre after the last war. He was still singing and making LP recordings in the sixties.

Baccaloni was a bass and **ERNESTO BADINI** (1876–1937) a baritone who enjoyed a reputation in serious as well as buffo roles. Both sang Don Pasquale and the Sacristan in *Tosca*; otherwise, although their repertories were vast, yet they were vastly different. Badini's first appearance took place in 1895, at San Colombano al Lambro, as Figaro in *Il barbiere*. In the



course of the next twenty years, throughout Italy and in South America he was immensely busy in an enormous variety of roles. Towards the end of his career he recorded the title role in *Don Pasquale*, with Schipa, Poli and Saraceni, from which our excerpt is taken.

**MARIANO STABILE** (1888–1968) had a long and impressive career as a singing actor – by singing actor we mean someone who does a lot of acting and rather less singing. His debut took place at Palermo in 1909, as Marcello in *La Bohème*. During the next dozen years he sang a typical baritone repertory throughout Italy, Spain, Portugal and South America. When he essayed Falstaff for the first time at La Scala, Milan, in 1921, under Toscanini, he began a second career which sustained him for another thirty-eight years. He came to Covent Garden fairly regularly between 1926 and 1931, at this stage still undertaking de Nevers in *Les Huguenots*, Gérard and Marcello, but after a somewhat mixed reception he concentrated increasingly on Malatesta, Gianni Schicchi, Beckmesser and Falstaff with an occasional Scarpia, Iago and Don Giovanni thrown in. He repeated his Scarpia, Malatesta and Falstaff on visits to Glyndebourne and at the Cambridge Theatre after the war. At La Scala in 1955 he was the Poet in Rossini's *Il turco in Italia* with Callas and Rossi Lemeni (also recorded by EMI). His last appearance on any stage was as Falstaff in Venice in 1959.

Like many another older Italian singer **MARIO BASIOLA** (1892–1965) was a pupil of Antonio Cotogni. His first appearance was in 1918, then he sang in Florence and Barcelona before spending some years in the United States. In 1929 he joined the San Carlo Opera Company remaining with it through three seasons. After 1924 he appeared for the next seven summers with an ensemble from the Chicago opera at Ravinia Park. From 1925 until 1932 he appeared at the Metropolitan, New York, singing a variety of parts including Amonasro, Alfio, Valentin in *Faust*, Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*, Germont, Escamillo, Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, Jodelet in Lattuada's *Le preziose ridicole*, Pedrito in Montemezzi's *La notte di Zoraima* and the Venetian guest in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*. After 1935 he returned to Italy to La Scala, Milan, as Barone di Valdeburgo in Bellini's *La straniera*, Baldassare in Cilea's *L'Arlesiana*, Barnaba, Antonio in *Linda di Chamounix*, Gérard and Rigoletto. He arrived at Covent Garden in 1939 but this seems to have been the end of his career and he did not make much of an impression. After the war, for a while, he taught singing in Australia. He was Sharpless in the HMV recording of *Madama Butterfly* with Gigli and Toti dal Monte.

Although born in Italy **APOLLO GRANFORTE** (1886–1975) began his career in the Argentine, where he made his debut at Rosario in 1916 as Germont in *La traviata*. Subsequently he returned home and enlisted in the army in the First World War. Thereafter he appeared at the Costanzi, Rome, the Dal Verme, Milan and the Regio, Turin, where he created Svarga in the world premiere of Lualdi's *La figlia del re* in 1922. The same year he made the first of four visits to La Scala, Milan, where he sung Amfortas in *Parsifal* and Don Carlo in *La forza del destino* and was the first Menècrate in Mascagni's *Nerone* in 1936. In 1924 in a company led by Melba he took part in a season in Australia. The following year at the Colón, Buenos Aires, he was Scarpia, Gérard, Rigoletto, Di Luna, Tonio, Telramund in *Lohengrin* and Don Liborio in the first performance of Boer's *El materro*. He remained occupied until the Second World War when, in September 1941, he sang in the world premiere of Giuranna's *Jamanto* at the Teatro della Novità in Bergamo. After this he taught singing, first at Ankara then Prague and finally in Milan. His warm, round, typically Italianate voice can be heard in several complete opera recordings made by HMV in the late twenties.

**CESARE FORMICHI** (1883–1949) was busy at many of the world's leading opera houses through a lengthy career. He seems to have made his first appearance in 1909. In that year 'his stately figure, striking personality and splendid voice' were all noted when he sang The Wanderer at the Carlo Felice, Genoa, where he was also Worms in Franchetti's *Germania* and Alfonso in *La favonta* before commencing his wide travels immediately afterwards. In the United States at Boston and then Chicago he was de Nevers in *Les Huguenots*, di Luna, Germont, Amonasro and Marcello. In the next few years he progressed through several Wagnerian roles. In 1912 in Russia he took a variety of parts on a visit to Kiev including Scarpia, Rigoletto, Renato, Barnaba in *La Gioconda* and Nelusko in *L'Africaine*. Back in Italy he was Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*, Re Raimondo in Mascagni's *Isabeau* and he appeared in the world premieres of Orefice's *Radda* and Camussi's *La du Barry*. He made his first trip to the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1914 and returned in 1925 and 1926. He spent ten years with the Chicago opera after 1922 and visited Covent Garden on four occasions between 1924 and 1937. He also sang at Copenhagen, Vichy, Naples, Paris and Monte-Carlo.



If the career of Formichi seems busy that of **CARLO GALEFFI** (1882–1961) exceeded it in length and breadth. He made his debut at Fermo, about twenty five miles south of Ancona, in 1907 as Alfonso in *La favorita*. In the next few years he was busy throughout Italy as Germont, Figaro, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Amonasro, Nelusko in *L'Africaine*, Rigoletto, Enrico in *Lucia* and Nabucco. In 1910 he paid a visit to the United States: at Boston he was Marcello, Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, di Luna and Rance in *La fanciulla del West* and somewhere amongst these he sandwiched in a solitary performance of Germont to Melba's Violetta at the Metropolitan, which was his only appearance in New York. In Europe again in 1913, at La Scala, Milan, he sang Rodrigo; in the opinion of one critic 'it would be hard to imagine him having any rival'. He returned regularly for the next twenty seven years in a huge repertory. In 1914 he made the first of sixteen visits to the Colón, Buenos Aires, where he was also Scindia in Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*, Riccardo in *I puritani*, Guglielmo Tell, Gellner in Catalani's *La Wally* and Gianni Schicchi in 1952. As late as 1954 he sang in *Rigoletto* at the Teatro di Via Manzoni in Milan. He made many records (including several complete operas) for EMI/Columbia.

Like Mario Basiola **BENVENUTO FRANCI** (1891–1985) was a student of Cotogni. He took part in a concert in June 1916 and was pronounced 'an excellent baritone with an admirable voice'. His first operatic appearance took place at the Adriano, Rome in 1917. In the next few years he was busy singing Giannotto in Mascagni's *Lodoletta*, Ford in *Falstaff*, Faraone in *Mosé*, Amonasro, Enrico in *Lucia*, Hermann in Catalani's *Loreley*, a Soldier in the world premiere of Mascagni's *Il piccolo Maral*, Giancotto in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* and Tonio. In 1923 he reached La Scala, Milan and spent seventeen years undertaking a variety of different parts. He appeared at Covent Garden three times between 1925 and 1946 and at the Colón, Buenos Aires on four occasions after 1926. He retired from the stage in 1955 and died in Rome on 27th February, 1985.

This may not have been a golden age but there were a large number of first class Italian baritones active. **GIOVANNI INGHILLERI** (1894–1959) had a lengthy career: he made his debut as Valentin in *Faust* at the Carcano, Milan in 1919 and he was still singing in Italy into the nineteen-fifties. In his early years he appeared in France, Spain and at many leading Italian theatres, in Rome, Genoa, Florence and Venice. He sang at Monte-Carlo in 1924, as Marcello in *La Bohème* and Rance in *La fanciulla del West*. Between 1928 and 1935 he was a member of the company at Covent Garden, where he was Iago, Tonio, Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, Scarpia, Amonasro, Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*, Germont, Figaro and Manfredo in Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re*. He joined the Chicago Opera in 1929, as di Luna and Rigoletto. His career at La Scala, however, did not begin until 1941, where he sang two roles in Pizzetti's *Fra Gherardo*, then he was Michele in *Il tabarro*, Telramund in *Lohengrin*, Shaklovity in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, Lo Sconosciuto in Sonzogno's *La Regina Uliva* and L'Ami in Milhaud's *Le pauvre Matelot*. He sang in concert and made a few records in London after the 1939-45 war.

La Scala was also the home of **CARLO TAGLIABUE** (1898–1978). His debut took place at Lodi, near Milan, as Hermann in Catalani's *Loreley* in 1922. In the next few years he was at Florence, Palermo, Verona and Lisbon. He arrived at La Scala in 1931, as Alfio in *Cavalleria rusticana*; later he took parts in a variety of new works including Basilio in Respighi's *La Fiamma*, The Pilgrim and Zosimo in the same composer's *Maria Egiziaca*. At the beginning of his career he also undertook a number of Wagnerian roles in Italian. By the last war however he was singing Rigoletto, Don Carlo in *La forza del destino*, Gellner in *La Wally*, Renato, Amonasro, Gérard, Marcello, Riccardo in *I puritani* and at the end of his career, in the fifties, with Callas, he was Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, di Luna in *Il trovatore* and Germont. He appeared at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1934 and made a visit to the Metropolitan, New York for two seasons after 1937. But apparently his 'bull-voiced baritone' cared little for 'suavity of tone and projection of line' and it was his Alfio, rather than Rigoletto or di Luna, which found him 'an almost ideal interpreter'. He sang at Covent Garden in 1938 and 1946 and then at a Stoll Theatre season in 1953. He recorded extensively for Cetra; his few early HMV records are very rare.

It seems appropriate to conclude this list of Italian baritones with **RICCARDO STRACCIARI** (1875–1955), for although his career stretches back to the beginning of this century yet he made many electric records, including a complete *Rigoletto* and *Il barbiere* neither of which has been surpassed. In particular, his singing of Figaro's recitatives is a textbook lesson in style, rich in humour, every appoggiatura in place and he moves from speech to song with complete spontaneity of utterance. His voice may not have been the splendid thing that Ruffo's was, nor was it so beautifully used or as mellow as



Battistini's and it was not so characteristic as Amato's; that said, it was nevertheless a first-class instrument, admirably produced all the way to a brilliant high A flat. It is reported that he sang Figaro almost a thousand times in his career; even allowing for a little exaggeration there is no doubt he sang it more often than any of his contemporaries.

Stracciari's colleagues in the recordings of *Il barbiere* and *Rigoletto* are Mercedes Capsir (q.v.) and **DINO BORGIOLI** (1891–1960), who sings Count Almaviva and the Duke. His debut took place at the Pergola, Florence in 1911, as Rinaldo in Lully's *Armide*: 'his limpid, silvery and secure voice' and 'the brave way he overcame the numerous difficulties in the part' were much praised – 'such intelligent artistry bodes well for the future'. During the next ten years his career was one of accelerating activity; he sang Arturo in *I puritani*, Fernando in *La favorita*, Elvino in *La sonnambula*, Ernesto, des Grieux in *Manon*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Almaviva, Alain in Massenet's *Grisélidis*, the Duke, Fenton and Hoffmann, at Genoa, Ferrara, Trieste, Naples and La Scala. He was at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1921 and then went with Melba's company to Australia in 1924. The next year he made his Covent Garden debut as Edgardo, but for whatever reasons it was a failure and remaining performances were replaced by *Il barbiere*. During the next twelve years he became a regular visitor, singing Pinkerton, Dmitri in *Boris Godunov*, Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with Supervia, Alfredo, Rodolfo, the Duke, Ernesto and Riccardo in *Un ballo* and, save for the last all received good notices. He appeared at Monte-Carlo, Chicago, Paris and San Francisco and gave single performances as Rodolfo and Don Ottavio at the Metropolitan in 1934/35, in which 'he came and went without leaving behind more than a dim impression of a well-schooled artist of dry voice and limited warmth'. After the last war for a short while he directed a season of Italian opera given at the Cambridge Theatre, London. He was a well-known teacher in London, numbering Joan Hammond and Charles Craig among his more successful pupils.

Comparatively little is known of the career of **ENZO DE MURO LOMANTO** (1902–1952). He made his debut at Catanzaro in 1925, as Alfredo in *La traviata*. After some performances of Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and the Duke in *Rigoletto* at the San Carlo, Naples, came his first appearance at La Scala, Milan in 1928, as Tonio in *La figlia del reggimento*; the *figlia* was dal Monte. The same year they went to Australia together, where they were married. They returned to La Scala in Giordano's *Il re*; he was Colombello, she was Rosalina. The next season he sang Fenton and Ottavio, then at Christmas 1930 they were together again for the last time, in *Don Pasquale*. The marriage failed and so, it seems, did his career, for he did not appear at La Scala again for more than ten years. He made tours of Holland, Spain and Hungary and in 1938 undertook Hoffmann at the Maggio Musicale, Florence. Then in 1943, during the war and after dal Monte had sung there for the last time, he returned to La Scala, but only for a solitary Duke.

No other tenor was more typical of his time than **TITO SCHIPA** (1889–1965). He sang at the Metropolitan between 1932 and 1941 and appeared intermittently at the Colón, Buenos Aires until 1940. During this time his repertory was made up of roles like Nemorino, Almaviva, Alfredo, Ottavio, Wilhelm Meister in *Mignon*, Des Grieux, Ernesto and Elvino. Apart from some appearances in 1916 and 1929 his career at La Scala did not get under way until 1932 and he returned fairly often until 1950, when he sang Paolino in Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto* in a cast that included Hilde Güden and Boris Christoff. The characteristic charm of his manner, that has endeared him so strongly to record collectors, was a part of the idiom of the era in which he lived. In the previous generation, De Lucia, for example, had also been a charmer yet his art, in his inimitable florid singing, retained a fine finish that we can hear on any of his recordings, but by Schipa's day the microphone rendered much of this obsolete. It is interesting to note how even Tauber has better preserved certain traditional practices from *bel canto*, particularly the way he ornaments the line at climaxes with gruppetti and mordents. [It must be said, however, that his London concert shortly after the last war was a revelation in technique and vocal poise]

Pretty well nothing is known of **TINO FOLGAR** (1892–1983). He was a Spaniard and seems to have appeared as much in zarzuela as in opera. It is known that he took the part of Lindoro in *L'italiana in Algeri* with Supervia at the Adriano, Rome in 1926. In the following year he sang the Duke in a complete recording of *Rigoletto* with Lina Pagliughi. Finally his name turns up again in a night club act in Barcelona. His zarzuela records display a de Lucia-like delight in gorgheggi and fioriture – which also delight the listener.



A typical *tenorino* of this period, **LUIGI FORT** (1907–1976), seems to have had a short and not very eventful career. He made his first appearance at Turin in 1927, in *Lucia* as Arturo – the other tenor in the Sextet. In 1935 at the Maggio Musicale, Florence he took the title role in the world premiere of Pizzetti's *Orseolo*. He came to La Scala, Milan the next year, succeeding Schipa as Paolino in *Il matrimonio segreto*; afterwards he was Zorzeto in another first performance, that of Wolf-Ferrari's *Il campiello*, then he sang Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* and Gelindo in Cimarosa's *L'impresario in angustie*. In 1937 he appeared at Covent Garden in two performances of *Falstaff* as Fenton.

**ALESSANDRO ZILIANI** (1906–1977) first sang at the Dal Verme, Milan in 1928, as Pinkerton in *Butterfly*. In 1932 he came to La Scala and returned fairly often until 1946, singing Baldo in Pedrollo's *La primavera fiorentina*, Enzo in *La Gioconda*, des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, Il Figlio in Ghedini's *Maria d'Alessandria*, Pinkerton, Luigi in *Il tabarro*, Paolo in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* and Gregory in *Boris Godunov*. In 1940, in Rome, he took the part of Truffaldino in Busoni's *Turandot* at the Italian premiere. He also sang in San Francisco, Berlin, Munich and Vienna. Later in his career he took part in operetta and made films and in the nineteen-sixties he was busy in Milan as an opera singers' agent. He sang Alfredo in HMV's first electrical recording of *La traviata*.

Another tenor whose career did not properly recover after the interruption of the last war was **GALLIANO MASINI** (1896–1986). He made his debut at his native Livorno in 1923, as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. For the next seven years he sang in Italy and then, in 1930 journeyed to Buenos Aires for the first of three visits to the Colón, where he was Alfredo in *La traviata*, Edgardo in *Lucia*, Pinkerton, the Duke, Rodolfo, Turiddu, Cavaradossi, Hagenbach in Catalani's *Loreley*, Paolo in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* and Guidon in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar Saltan*. When he made his La Scala debut in 1932 his repertory had become slightly heavier: Faust in *Mefistofele*, Enzo in *La Gioconda*, Don José, Walther in *Die Meistersinger*, Radamès and Andrea Chénier. In 1937 and 1938 he visited Chicago, where he was Calaf in *Turandot* as well as Rodolfo and Cavaradossi. He arrived at the Metropolitan, New York in the last season before the war. 'Some old-fashioned sobs and tortured high notes offended good taste, but the vigour of his performance was stimulating. Whether his Cavaradossi or Radamès might have endured to become irritating as well as stimulating one cannot say.' Records confirm his career – a splendid voice, not aided by intelligence.

Few singers had a longer career at La Scala, Milan than **FRANCESCO MERLI** (1887–1976). He came second in a singing competition (Gigli won it) and made his debut there in 1916; his last performance took place in 1946, thirty years later, which must be a record. His first comprimario role was in Spontini's *Fernando Cortez* and he went on to Eliseo in Rossini's *Mosé*, Fausto in Favara's *Urania*, Lohengrin, des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* and Baldo in the world premiere of Respighi's *Belfagor*. He was the third Calaf in *Turandot*, Don Pedro in Carmine Guarano's *Madama di Challant*, Faust in *Mefistofele* and many other roles including Otello. Elsewhere he managed to find time to sing at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1920 and 1932, where his repertory also included Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and Ippolito in Pizzetti's *Fedra*. Between 1926 and 1930 he made three appearances at Covent Garden. He was at the Metropolitan, New York for one season in 1931 and sang Pollione in *Norma* at the Paris Opéra in 1935.

At one time **RENATO ZANELLI** (1892–1935) recorded as a baritone, but in 1924, at the San Carlo, Naples, he emerged as a tenor, as Raoul in *Les Huguenots*. During the following year he took part in seasons at Rome, Florence and Palermo. In 1926 he undertook Otello for the first time at Turin, but he was not a success. He persevered with it and sang it again at Monte-Carlo in 1927, but it was not until 1928 at Parma and Piacenza that he enjoyed a great triumph in the part. In the course of the next six years he sang it at Covent Garden, the Colón, Buenos Aires, Santiago and Rome. His other roles included Lohengrin, Alfredo in *La traviata*, Pollione in *Norma*, Licinio in *La vestale*, Alvaro in *La forza del destino*, Faust in *Mefistofele*, Manrico, Cavaradossi, Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West*, Radamès, Tristan and Siegmund. In 1934 he went again to the United States, where he had been as a baritone, but by this time he was stricken with cancer and he only sang in a concert.



Doubtless the announced salary cut by the Metropolitan, New York in 1932 was the main reason for the departure of **BENIAMINO GIGLI** (1890–1957), but there was another. At that time a career at the Metropolitan put, as it were, a singer's art into aspic. We can hear this if we compare the early with the late recordings of Martinelli, a singer who remained at the Met through more than thirty years. His style stayed the same. Gigli's did not, for like Caruso's it was always dynamic. In the nineteen-thirties Gigli sang in Berlin, Paris, Hamburg, Rio de Janeiro, Budapest, London, Chicago and Buenos Aires and throughout Italy, in concerts and opera: as well as *Aida*, *Tosca*, *Andrea Chénier*, *La Bohème*, *Manon*, *L'amico Fritz*, *Zazà*, *Lucia* and *Rigoletto*, by degrees he turned to early nineteenth-century operas such as *La favorita*, *Il Guarany*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Il pirata*, *Norma* and *Poliuto*.

It may be difficult for a male singer to begin his studies before his voice has broken, yet both Gigli and **JUSSI BJÖRLING** (1911–1960) had sung professionally at a very early age. Björling was a treble when he first toured the United States as a member of the Björling Male Voice Quartet – we can say that he was always singing. This precocious talent almost certainly accounts for the remarkable limpidity of his voice, giving to his singing a fluency that enabled it to sound out brilliantly even in the vast spaces of the old Metropolitan or the Albert Hall (it should not be forgotten that it was continuous training through childhood that helped create the unique brilliance of the castrato voice). When he reached his teens he appeared as a soloist with a dance band under a *nom de guerre*. About 1928 he took some lessons from John Forsell and then, in 1930, he made his debut at the Stockholm Opera, as the Lamplighter in *Manon Lescaut*. Throughout the next few years he was in Scandinavia and the Baltic states and it was not until he reached Vienna in 1936, as Radamès, that he set people talking. The progress of his career was rapid. In the next three years he sang Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at Salzburg, recitals in London and New York, the Verdi *Requiem* with Toscanini in Lucerne, the Duke in *Rigoletto* and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at Chicago, Manrico in *Il trovatore* at Covent Garden and he appeared for two seasons at the Metropolitan, New York, as Rodolfo, Faust, Manrico, Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera* and the Duke, before the outbreak of the Second World War obliged him to return to Sweden. His post-war career is too well known to need recapitulating here.

The career of **ANTONIO CORTIS** (1891–1952), a Spaniard, began by degrees: at the age of sixteen he joined the chorus at the Liceo, Barcelona and within a couple of years graduated to singing small parts: at the Real, Madrid he was Morales in *Carmen* with Maria Gay and a Servant in Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan* with Battistini. In 1917 he appeared at the Colón, Buenos Aires where he worked as a *tenore di spalla*, singing the Helmsman in *Tristan*, Ivan in Giordano's *Siberia* and Beppe in *Pagliacci*, in which Caruso was Canio. Later he returned to Spain and then came on to Italy, travelling via Trieste, Terni, Bari and Naples, before accepting a contract for three years at the Costanzi, Rome in 1920, by which time he was a mature artist. Here he was Giuseppe in Catalani's *Loreley*, Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West*, Luigi in *Il tabarro*, Walther von Stolzing and he created Pedro in the world premiere of Vittadini's *L'anima allegra*. After a visit to the Coliseo, Buenos Aires, as Radamès, Don José and Cavaradossi in 1924, he arrived at Chicago where he remained until 1933; he sang Edgardo in *Lucia*, Enzo in *La Gioconda*, Faust in *Mefistofele*, the Italian tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Alfredo, des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, Manrico, Lionel in *Martha*, Giannetto in Giordano's *La cena delle beffe* and Fenton, among other roles. He was at La Scala, Milan in 1931 and also sang Calaf in *Turandot* at Covent Garden. His final appearance took place at Zaragoza, in 1951, as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*.

Only the first part of the lengthy career of **GIACOMO LAURI-VOLPI** (1892–1979) need bother us now; he went on singing into the nineteen-fifties, by which time the results were equivocal. Caruso's principal successors included Gigli, Martinelli, Lauri-Volpi and Pertile. Of these Gigli was the most outstanding, for it was his style as much as his voice that enabled him, as it had done Caruso, to reach out to the rapidly growing audiences of his day and he enjoyed an equal success with the song repertory. In this respect at least the example of Caruso was copied by Gigli and to some extent by Schipa. Lauri-Volpi made his debut at Viterbo, as Arturo in *I puritani* in 1919. Later he travelled to Rome, Florence, Trieste, Bologna, Genoa, Milan and Ferrara, before going abroad to South America, Spain and Monte-Carlo. At this time his repertory was made up of mostly lyric roles. From 1922 for seventeen years he took part in seasons at the Colón, Buenos Aires, in many typical roles and also as Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Enzo in *La Gioconda*, Turiddu, Cavaradossi, Don José, Canio, Manrico and Radamès. In 1925 he made an appearance at La Scala, as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, but a contretemps with Toscanini over



Masini's cadenza at the end of 'La donna è mobile' prevented his singing there again for another eight years. In 1923 he was invited to the Metropolitan, New York by which time he was undertaking Pedro in Vittadini's *L'anima allegra*, Pinkerton, Alim in Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*, Giovanni Gallurese in Montemezzi's opera, Alfredo in *La traviata*, Licinio in Spontini's *La vestale*, Edgardo in *Lucia*, Vasco in *L'Africaine*, Pollione in *Nonna*, Rodolfo in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, Manrico and Radamès and he took the part of Calaf in the first performance of *Turandot* in America. Yet even in 1933, his last season there, he could still manage des Grieux in *Manon* and Elvino in *La sonnambula*.

The gramophone records of **AURELIANO PERTILE** (1885–1952) may be difficult to appreciate these days. His voice sounds big, brilliant and brazen. Everything seems exaggerated, almost hysterical at climaxes; the attack is too vehement and the tone over vibrant. His style was emotional and aimed at creating an exciting effect, which rarely failed with his compatriots. Records of an Italian *Lohengrin* demonstrate that he could sing with taste and a beautiful line, when he thought it appropriate. In complete recordings of *Aida* and *Il trovatore* he highlights certain phrases those often neglected – as only a master singer could. At La Scala, he reigned the leading tenor for more than a quarter of a century, but he had only a modest success in London on four occasions at Covent Garden and his career at the Metropolitan, New York was confined to one visit in 1921, when 'he was barely noticed'. He made his first appearance at Vicenza in 1911, as Lionel in *Martha*. Vicenza is about twenty-five miles west of Montagnana, his birth place, where by an odd coincidence Martinelli was also born the same year. In the next few years he was at Asti, Brescia, Genoa and Naples, singing Folco in Mascagni's *Isabeau*, Don José in *Carmen* and Mateo in Zandonai's *Conchita*. In 1916 he arrived at La Scala, as Paolo in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*, thereafter he appeared in a variety of different parts including Faust in *Mefistofele*, Lohengrin, Edgardo in *Lucia*, Andrea Chénier, Rodolfo, Pinkerton, Radamès, Fernando in *La favorita* and Nerone in the world premiere of Boïto's opera. When he came to London in 1927, Newman thought 'his voice naturally malleable and powerful, but used with considerable restraint'; at Covent Garden he also sang Enzo and Don Alvaro in *La forza del destino*. He was at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1923, 1926 and 1929, where his repertory included Alfredo in *La traviata*, Il Re in Alfano's *La leggenda di Sakuntala* and Enrico in *La campana sommersa*.

## THE FRENCH SCHOOL

Dal Monte and Pagliughi (q.v.) were finer singers of the type the public denominates 'coloratura' sopranos, but **LILY PONS** (1904–1976) is much more famous, even today. This was partly due, in all probability, to her charming appearance and partly to excellent timing; her sensational Met debut (one of the most successful in history) came just after Galli-Curci's retirement – and even Galli-Curci had never sung a high F, with which note Pons was generous. Who knows: if she had not gone to America so early in her career then her repertory might well have developed more fully, for in France in only two years she had already undertaken Gretel, Cherubino in *Figaro*, Baucis in Gounod's *Philémon et Baucis*, the Nightingale in Saint-Saëns' *Parysatis*, Blondine in *Die Entführung*, The Queen of the Night and Mimì whereas, in New York, in more than a quarter of a century, she sang only eleven roles: Lucia, Gilda, Rosina, Lakmé, Olympia, Philine, Amina, Linda, the Queen of Shemakhan in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'or*, Marie in *La Fille du régiment* and Violetta in *La traviata*, though this part she only attempted on one occasion at Chicago in 1951. Her debut took place at Mulhouse in 1928. It was Maria Gay and Giovanni Zenatello who arranged an audition for her at the Metropolitan. She made her first appearance there in 1931, as Lucia, after which she returned regularly until 1958. Her last part too was Lucia, the same year Callas undertook it at the Met; next time it was given with Sutherland. In 1932 and 1934 she visited the Colón, Buenos Aires. She appeared at Covent Garden in 1935 and she also took part in seasons in Paris, Monte-Carlo and San Francisco, at none of these adding any new roles to her repertory.

**LEILA BEN SEDIRA** (1909–1982) was born in Algiers. She made her first appearance at the Opéra-Comique, Paris in 1929, as Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She created La Marchande de beignets in Ducasse's *Cantegril* in 1931. Other parts she sang included Rosina (with Chaliapin), Lakmé and Mireille. She appeared in opera at Monte-Carlo and in Egypt and she also undertook concerts in France, Belgium, Holland, Sweden and Italy. She sang Yniold in Desormières' famous 1942 recording of *Pelléas et Mélisande*.



The career of **EMMA LUART** (1892–1968) began at the Hague in 1914, after which she came to Paris via Brussels. Her Opéra-Comique debut took place as Lakmé in 1922 and she remained a principal there until the last war. She sang Gilda, Juliette, Mireille, Manon and Mimì, as well as La Princesse in Rabaud's *Marouf*, Aliette in Lazzari's *La Lépreuse*, Segrario in Hüe's *Dans l'Ombre de la cathédrale* and Zerlina in Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. At the Opéra-Comique she was the first Fiorella in Offenbach's *Les Brigands* and she created La Reine in Samuel-Rousseau's *Le Bon Roi Dagobert*, Angélique in d'Ollone's *Georges Dandin*, Janneton in Ibert's *Le Roi d'Yvetot* and Sophie in Pierné's *Sophie Arnould*. At Monte-Carlo she sang Manon and created Dilara in Samuel-Rousseau's *Le Hulla* and Parassia in Mussorgsky's *Sorotchinsky Fair* with McCormack.

**GERMAINE FERALDY** (1894–1949) sang at various provincial theatres before securing her first engagement at the Opéra-Comique in 1924 as Micaela. She too managed parts like Olympia in *Hoffmann*, Mireille and Philine in *Mignon*, as well as Manon, Mimì, Angélique in Bruneau's *Le Rêve* and La Princesse in Rabaud's *Marouf*. She took the role of Nantilde in Samuel-Rousseau's *Le bon Roi Dagobert* at its premiere in Paris in 1927 and she was also Marenka in the first performance of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* at the Opéra-Comique in 1928. She sang in EMI/Columbia's complete recordings of *Manon* and *Werther* and in the abridged *Orphée* (Gluck) with Alice Raveau (q.v.).

Although she was Norwegian, **EIDÉ NORENA** (1884–1968) eventually settled in Lausanne and much of her repertory as well as her singing style became French by adoption. She seems to have given some piano concerts in Norway early in her life and then made her operatic debut in Oslo in 1907, as Amor in Gluck's *Orfeo*. In 1909 she married a Norwegian actor, Egel Naess Eidé and she appeared under his name in 1924 at La Scala, Milan, as Gilda in *Rigoletto*. Later the same year she came to Covent Garden and returned five times before 1937. In Paris, at the Opéra, after 1925 she was the Queen of Shemakhan in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'or*, Blonde in *Die Entführung*, Mathilde in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, the Queen in *Les Huguenots*, Juliette and Ophélie in *Hamlet*. She went across to America for the first time in 1926, to Chicago, where she appeared as Eudoxie in Halévy's *La Juive*, Lisabetta in Giordano's *La cena delle beffe*, Nedda, Anna in Catalani's *Loreley*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Snegourotchka in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera and Butterfly; she created Claris Willoughby in the world premiere of Cadman's *The Witches of Salem*. After 1930 she made regular visits to Monte-Carlo. She arrived at the Metropolitan, New York in 1933 and remained a member of the company for five seasons. She retired in 1939.

**NINON VALLIN** (1886–1981) was also a perfect lyric soprano and she devoted much time to song recitals. In fact her first appearance in Paris in 1911 was at a Concert Colonne, where she took part in a performance of Debussy's *La Demoiselle élue* and the following month she sang in the world premiere of *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*. From this time she became friendly with Debussy and he accompanied her in a concert she gave at the Salle Gaveau in 1914, in which they performed for the first time his *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*. Subsequently she introduced many new works by other composers, including Reynaldo Hahn, Joaquin Nin and Albert Roussel, whose *Les Poèmes de Ronsard* she presented for the first time at the Vieux Colombier in 1924. Her operatic debut took place at the Opéra-Comique in 1912, as Micaela in *Carmen*. She returned there often during the next twenty-five years, as Charlotte in *Werther*, La Princesse in Rabaud's *Marouf* and Salud in de Falla's *La vida breve* among many other roles. She created Clara in Leroux's *Les Cadeaux de Noël* and Manuella in Erlanger's *La Soreillère* and she sang in the first Paris performance of Respighi's *Maria Egiziaca*. She visited the Colón, Buenos Aires eight times after 1916, singing Marguerite, Suzanne in Wolf-Ferrari's *Il segreto di Susanna*, Nedda, Vita in d'Indy's *L'Etranger*, Thaïs, Charpentier's Luisa (!) – she actually sang it in Italian – Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust*, Anna Maria in Riccitelli's *I compagnacci*, Juliette, the Queen of Shemakhan in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'or*, Anna in Zandonai's *I cavalieri d'Ekebù*, Mélisande and Alceste in Gluck's opera, etc. She also gave song recitals and appeared in a performance of Franck's oratorio *Les Béatitudes*. In 1917 she was at La Scala, three years later at the Opéra and she made her last stage appearances at Monte-Carlo in 1943, when she sang the Countess in *Figaro* and *Carmen*. She continued to give recitals until after the end of the war.

**“POVLA FRIJSH** (1881–1960) is a Dane, but her predilections are French and in some ways her style of singing is dominated by French traits, though she is by no means limited in her sympathies or knowledge.” Although she was Danish,



she studied in Paris with Jean Périer, the creator of Pelléas. Her first recital took place in 1907 and she continued to give them until the time she went to New York in 1940. Her recitals would include works by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Strauss, but she also undertook the songs of Chausson, Grieg and Alexandre Georges. She hardly ever sang in opera.

Another French lyric soprano, who appears to have spent quite some time in Argentina, was **JANE BATHORI** (1876–1970). She made her debut in a song recital in 1898. Four years later she appeared at La Scala as Hansel to Storchio's Gretel and Jane in Franchetti's *Germania*; Caruso was Federico and the opera was conducted by Toscanini. In 1904 she sang Ravel's *Shéhérazade* in Paris. From this time she occupied herself principally with French art songs. Debussy dedicated to her two of his song cycles: *Le Promenoir des deux amants* and *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*. Between 1914 and 1918 she became a Director of the Vieux Colombier, at which a number of works of *Les Six* were first heard. In the twenties she took part regularly in concerts in Buenos Aires, where she sang in Honegger's *Le Roi David* and *Judith*. At the Colón in 1932, in a special spring season, she appeared on stage again, as Concepción in Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole*.

Like Bathori **MADELEINE GREY** (1897–1979) was another successful singer of *mélodies*. Her first concert took place in Paris in 1920. She was an interpreter of many contemporary works: Ravel's *Chansons hébraïques*, Fauré's *Mirages* and Canteloube's arrangements of the traditional *Chants d'Auvergne*. She appeared regularly in Paris in concerts and sang abroad in Italy and North America. Ravel supervised some of her recordings of his music, including the excerpt here.

The career of **GERMAINE MARTINELLI** (1887–1964) was almost entirely given over to concerts, probably because of her great height. She studied with a number of successful teachers including Jean Lassalle. Her concert debut was in 1912. In Paris she sang in a variety of oratorios as well as song cycles. She made visits to Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain. Her records include an air from Massenet's first opera, *Marie-Magdeleine*, which was given in concert from the time of its composition in 1873 until it was first heard at the Opéra-Comique in 1906.

Another attractive singer at this time was **SUZANNE CESBRON-VISEUR** (1878–1967). Her first appearance was at the Opéra-Comique in 1902, as Massenet's Grisélidis. She remained in France throughout the rest of her career. In Paris her repertory continued with Charlotte in *Werther*, Mélisande, Antonia and Giulietta in *Hoffmann* and *Butterfly*; she succeeded Calvé as Louise de la Vallière in Hahn's *La Carmélite* and created Oriane in Halphen's *Cor Fleuri*. In 1923 she arrived at the Opéra, again as Grisélidis. Her other roles included Pamina, Marguerite in *Faust* and *La Damnation de Faust*; she was the first Regina in Sachs's *Les Burgraves* and, as Vénus in Lully's *La Triomphe de l'amour*, she was considered 'truly excellent' while the rest of the cast were criticised for 'their heavy style and mediocre singing'. In 1924 she was Mélisande at Monte-Carlo. She sang a variety of works by Fauré, Duparc, Debussy and Kaval. She was the teacher of Régine Crespin.

**SUZANNE BALGUERIE** (1888–1973) sang elsewhere in France as well as Paris but it was at the Opéra-Comique that she made her reputation. At her debut there in 1911 she caused a sensation as Ariane in Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* – 'Not only has Mme Balguerie a very dramatic voice, but she has the quiet dignity of a great artist'. She created Manouchka in Bachelet's *Quand la cloche sonnera*, Galathée in Cras's *Polyphème*, Françoise in Milhaud's *La Prebis égarée* and she was Mourya in Rabaud's *L'Appel de la mer*, derived from Synge's *Riders to the sea*. In 1925 she was Isolde in the first production at the Opéra-Comique. At the Opéra she was Brunnhilde in *Die Walküre* and she was also the first Guanhamara in Sachs's *Les Burgraves*, Oriante in Bachelet's *Un Jardin sur l'Oronte* and Mélissinde in Witkovsky's *La Princesse lointaine*.

It is by no mere chance that so many French singers of this period failed to duplicate abroad their Parisian successes. The days of Rossini's influence on French singing, or the truly international style of such artists as Calvé, Maurel and Plançon were long gone by. One great singer who, although she generally sings in French on her records, does so with an unfailingly round Italianate tone, is **GERMAINE LUBIN** (1890–1979). Some critics complained when she came only second in a singing competition in 1911 – 'notre enseignement du chant est en pleine décadence' – and in 1912 she won outright. She made her debut that year at the Opéra-Comique as Antonia, then created for that theatre Ariadne in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Koethe in Ropartz's *Le Pays* and Pénélope in Fauré's opera. At the Opéra she made her first appearance in 1916



as Léonore in d'Indy's *Le Chant de la cloche*; she created Nicéa in the same composer's *La Légende de Saint-Christophe*, l'Impératrice Charlotte in Milhaud's *Maximilian* and Gina in *La Chartreuse de Parme* and she also sang all three Brünnhildes, Isolde, the Marschallin, Ariane in Massenet's opera, Alceste, Iphigénie Salammbo in Reyer's opera, Leonore in *Fidelio*, Cassandre in *Les Troyens*, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, Marina in *Boris Godunov*, Dolorès in Paladilhe's *Patrie!*, Monna Vanna in Février's opera, Fausta in Massenet's *Roma* and Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust*. In 1930 she sang Isolde in Vienna. She took the part of Oktavian. Two years later at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino she appeared as Télaire in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, which she had sung in Paris as long ago as 1918 and she sang it there again in 1940. In 1938 she made the first of two visits to Covent Garden, as Alceste and Ariane in Dukas's opera, returning in 1939 as Kundry and Isolde. She repeated Kundry and Isolde at Bayreuth in 1938 and 1939. The outbreak of war prevented her engagement at the Metropolitan, New York for a new production of Gluck's *Alceste* in 1941.

The first engagement that we can trace of the contralto **GERMAINE CERNAY** (1900–1943) took place at the Opéra in 1925, when she was Euryclée in Fauré's *Pénélope* in the course of a Fauré Festival. At the Opéra-Comique two years later she sang La Gobba in Alfano's *La Risurrezione*, thereafter essaying a variety of small parts, including Floriane in de Bréville's *Eros vainqueur*, La Tour in Delannoy's *Le Fou de la dame*, Un Berger and Léonor in Letorey's *Le Sicilien*, Sélysette in Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleu*, Javotte in *Manon*, La Gazette in Ibert's *Le Roi d'Yvetot* and she also managed a few bigger roles: Mignon, Charlotte in *Werther*, Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Suzuki in *Butterfly*.

**CLAIRE CROIZA** (1882–1948) began her career in Belgium, though she was French. She spent her first years at the Monnaie, Brussels, making her debut there as Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande*; thereafter in 1910 she was Eros in the world premiere of de Bréville's *Eros vainqueur* and then went on a visit to Cologne as Carmen. In 1914 at the Opéra-Comique she created la Tisseuse in Doret's *La Tisseuse d'orlies*. Her other roles included Pénélope in Fauré's opera, Charlotte in *Werther* and Orphée. At a Colonne concert in Paris in 1913 she sang Hélène in Boulanger's cantata *Faust et Hélène*. *Le Ménestrel* praised 'her beautiful voice superbly served by a vibrant dramatic temperament'. She also earned a similar reception in 1925, at Mézières, when she sang Honegger's Judith: 'it is enough that she has in her heart a talent wholly at the service of the work to which she is dedicated'. Many of her recordings of 20th century French songs are accompanied by their composers.

Of these three contraltos, the name of **ALICE RAVEAU** (1884–1945) has been best preserved by the gramophone, which recorded (in part) her Orphée. This was her debut role in 1908 at the Opéra-Comique, after which she sang it again in Orange in the summer of 1911. She appeared in Paris in several world premieres, she was Diana in Samuel-Rousseau's *Léone*, an Apparition in Bloch's *Macbeth*, Trine in Lazzari's *Le Sauleriot* and Une Misère in Delannoy's *Le Poirier de misère*. She was also Toinette in Leroux's *Le Chemineau*, La Vieille Tili in Lazzari's *La Lépreuse*, Margared in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Charlotte in *Werther* and Carmen. At Monte-Carlo in 1913 she sang Euryclée in Fauré's *Pénélope* and at the Opéra in 1929 she was Dalila.

The most outstanding French tenor of the day and the best since Paul Franz was **GEORGES THILL** (1897–1984). His vocal pedigree had the right international stamp from the beginning, when he went to Naples to study with Fernando de Lucia. He appeared first at the Opéra-Comique in 1918 as Don José in *Carmen*, after which he was Gérald in *Lakmé*, des Grieux, Werther, Canio in *Pagliacci* and Cavaradossi. By 1924 he had arrived at the Opéra and during the next thirty years got through a prodigious repertory. In 1928 he sang at Covent Garden as Samson and he returned in 1937 for a solitary Don José. In 1929 he began eight seasons at Monte-Carlo, as Roméo, Lionel in *Martha*, Raoul in *Les Huguenots* and Jean in *Le Prophète*, as well as two confections of Raoul Gunsbourg: *La Croisade des dames* and *Satan*. That same spring he was Calaf in *Turandot* at La Scala and he returned the next year as Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West* and Andrea Chénier. In the summer of 1929 he began the first of five visits to the Colón, Buenos Aires; there he sang Don Carlo in Verdi's opera, Sadko, Faust in *Mefistofele*, Julien in *Louise*, Fra Gherardo in Pizzetti's opera and Gaspard in Rabaud's *Roland et le mauvais garçon*. That same year he took the part of Calaf at the Verona Arena. He made his Metropolitan debut in 1931 and remained there two seasons: in the second as Gérald in *Lakmé*, he 'was in no better voice than in the previous year'. He starred in a number of films including *Chanson de Paris*, *Aux Portes de Paris* and *Louise*, which he also recorded with Ninon Vallin. His farewell was as Canio at the Opéra-Comique in 1953.



Like Thill, **RENÉ MAISON** (1895–1962) was an international artist. He was a Belgian and after a period of study in Paris he went to Geneva in 1920 to make his debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. From 1925 for three years he was at Monte-Carlo, where he sang Faust, Hoffmann, Jean in *Hérodiade*, Faust in *La Damnation de Faust*, Huon in Weber's *Oberon*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov* and Wladimir in Gunsbourg's *Ivan le terrible*. In 1927 he appeared at the Opéra-Comique as Dimitri in the local premiere of Alfano's *La risurrezione*; his other roles included Don José, Mylio in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Julien in *Louise*, Werther, Cavaradossi, Canio and Jean in Massenet's *Sapho*. He crossed the Atlantic for the first time in 1928 to Chicago, where he added Lohengrin, Roméo, the Italian tenor in *Rosenkavalier*, Araquil in Massenet's *La Navarraise*, Avito in *L'amore dei tre re*, Florestan and Parsifal. He returned to the Opéra in 1929 as Prinzivalle in Février's *Monna Vanna*, Siegmund and Samson. In 1931 at Covent Garden he 'was unaccountably replaced at the two repetitions (of *Lohengrin*)' and in 1936 he sang Julien and displayed 'a true tenor voice with plenty of power and the lyrical quality necessary for Charpentier's rather prosaic music'. He sang at the Colón in 1934 and, in marked contrast to Georges Thill he enjoyed a considerable success at the Metropolitan, where he took a variety of parts for eight seasons from 1936, adding to his repertory Walther in *Die Meistersinger*, des Grieux in *Manon* and Herod in Strauss's *Salome*. He was well remembered for 'sound musicianship and strong characterisation' and for his 'Slezak-like physical size' (in fact, he stood more than six foot four!); and 'the lustre of his voice wore well'.

The tenor **JOSÉ LUCCIONI** (1903–1978) was born in Corsica. He made his debut at Rouen in 1931, as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. Some months later he moved on to the Opéra, where he passed rapidly through parts like the Young Servant in Strauss's *Elektra*, Rodrigo in *Otello*, Rodolphe in *Guillaume Tell* and Choryphée in *Alceste*. Then came leading roles: Jean in *Hérodiade*, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Enée in *Les Troyens*, Radamès, Sigurd in Reyer's opera, Roméo, Mathô in Reyer's *Salammbô*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov* and *Otello*. He also appeared at the Opéra-Comique as Don José, Werther, Canio, des Grieux in *Manon*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Turiddu in *Cavalleria rusticana* and Cyrano in Alfano's opera, which he created at the world premiere in Rome in 1936. He undertook a variety of roles in almost regular seasons at Monte-Carlo between 1934 and 1950: Faust in *La Damnation de Faust*, Werther, Pinkerton and Don José and he played this last part at Covent Garden in 1935 opposite Supervia's Carmen. The following year he joined the company at the Colón, Buenos Aires, but he only managed a couple of Werthers, for Thill and Maison were also on the roster. In 1937 at Chicago he was Avito in *L'amore dei tre re*, Don José and Canio. After the Second World War he made a couple of films: *Colomba* and *Au Bout de la route*.

The gramophone records of **CÉSAR VEZZANI** (1886–1951), another Corsican, include a complete *Faust*. They reveal an excellent tenor voice and a singer of some power and authority. He may not be as musical or so fine an artist as Paul Franz but he compares well with Thill, Maison or Luccioni. However, his career in France remained provincial and in Paris he had some kind of disagreement with the Opéra-Comique, the only important theatre he did appear at. His debut took place in 1911; it does not seem to have been an unqualified success. According to Victor Debay, a reputable critic of that time, 'We heard a true tenor voice and a singer with a superb upper register, but one whose art, musicianship and command of nuance is practically non-existent'. The consensus of opinion was that 'he had much to learn'. He also sang Richard Coeur de Lion in Grétry's opera, Don José, Canio, Turiddu, des Grieux in *Manon*, le Faucheur in Meyerbeer's *Le Pardon de Plöërmel* and Don Enrique in Erlanger's *La Sorcière*.

When the First World War finished **RENÉ VERDIÈRE** (1899–1981) began his vocal studies in Paris. His career commenced in 1927 at the Opéra-Comique, as Max in *Der Freischütz*, after which he developed through parts like A Knight in *Parsifal*, Rodolphe in *Guillaume Tell*, Thoré in *Les Huguenots*, Melot in *Tristan und Isolde* and Ratan-Sen in Roussel's *Padmâvatî* until, at length, in his maturity, he was undertaking mostly Wagnerian roles: Erik, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Froh in *Das Rheingold*, Siegmund and Walther. He appeared at the Opéra-Comique in 1935 as Gargantua in the world premiere of the opera and he was also Don José, Turiddu, Canio, Cavaradossi, Yacha in Bachelet's *Quand la cloche sonnera* and he took the part of Gauvain in the first performance of Silver's *Quatre-vingt-treize* in Paris. He sang abroad only once, replacing Maison as Julien in *Louise* at Covent Garden in 1936, when he was considered to have given a 'workmanlike' performance. In 1948 and 1949 he appeared at Monte-Carlo as Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*.



Yet another tenor from Corsica was **GASTON MICHELETTI** (1892–1959). He made his first appearance at Rheims as Faust in 1922. In 1925 he arrived at the Opéra-Comique, as des Grieux in *Manon*. He created Rodolphe in Bruneau's *Angelo*, Le Chevalier in Fournier's *Le Chevalier de Mauléon*, Le Joueur de Viole in Laparra's opera, Gilbert in Bousquet's *Sarati le terrible*, he took the part of André in the local premiere of Samuel-Rousseau's *Tarass Boulba* and Matéo in Zandonai's *La Femme et le pantin*, otherwise *Conchita*. He was also Don José, Pylade in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Turiddu, Hoffmann, Gérald, Pinkerton, Canio, Dimitri in Alfano's *La risurrezione*, Mylio in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Paco in de Falla's *La vida breve*, Cavaradossi, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Roméo. He made guest appearances in other "French speaking" theatres.

Born in Spain, **MIGUEL VILLABELLA** (1892–1954) spent almost all the major part of his career in France, although he began with a concert in San Sebastien in 1917, a few miles from his birthplace at Bilbao. His stage debut took place in Paris in 1918 at the Théâtre de Poitiers, as Cavaradossi. In 1920 he began his long association with the Opéra-Comique in a number of small roles, including Spoletta, Nathanael in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Le Noctambule in *Louise* and Yamadori. Later he graduated to leading roles like Vincent in *Mireille*, Daniel in Auber's *Le Chalet*, Fernando in *Così fan tutte*, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, Mylio in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Tibéri in *Gismond* and eventually Pinkerton, Faust, Almaviva, Ottavio and he created Persée in Ibert's *Persée et Andromède*, Marcel in Bruneau's *Virginie* and Tomas in Laparra's *L'illustre Fregona*. He was Castor in the revival of Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* in 1935, which was repeated later the same year at Florence. In 1930 at Monte-Carlo he sang the Duke of Urbino in Johann Strauss's *Eine Nacht in Venedig* and Juliano in Auber's *Le Domino noir* in 1936.

The Belgian tenor **ANDRÉ D'ARKOR** (1901–1971) studied at his birthplace, Liège and in Brussels. He made his debut at Liège in 1924, as Gérald in *Lakmé*. After a period spent as a guest at Ghent and later Lyons, he arrived at the Monnaie, Brussels, where he remained until his retirement, when he returned home to direct the Liège Opera. In 1931 he appeared in Paris, at the Opéra-Comique, as des Grieux in *Manon*. Throughout his career he sang a substantial repertory of lyric tenor roles and particularly in those which displayed his brilliant top notes, as in this *Maître Pathélin* air.

**GIUSEPPE LUGO** (1898–1980) first sang when he was working in Belgium. In 1930 he appeared at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, as Cavaradossi. In the next few years he was des Grieux in *Manon*, Pinkerton, Werther, the Duke in *Rigoletto* and Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, the last of which he also took at Monte-Carlo in 1933. At Covent Garden he succeeded Borgioli and Lauri-Volpi as Cavaradossi in a solitary *Tosca* in 1936. In 1937 he arrived at La Scala, Milan repeating Cavaradossi and there he added Rodolfo, Faust in Boïto's *Mefistofele*, Nadir, Calaf and Dick Johnson. In the same years he took part in the summer seasons at Verona.

Born in Russia, **JOSEPH ROGATCHEWSKY** (1891–1985) arrived in Paris before the Russian revolution. After finishing his studies he appeared for the first time at Toulouse in 1922. Later that year at the Opéra-Comique, Paris he sang Cavaradossi; his other roles there included Turiddu, Canio, Araquil in Massenet's *La Navarraise*, Orphée, Mylio in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Don José and Werther. In 1931 he came to the Opéra as Lohengrin and Faust. He was a guest at the Vienna State Opera in 1929, then after 1953 for six years he became Director of the Monnaie, Brussels.

**JEAN PLANEL** (1903–1986) was a concert tenor at this time. His career began in 1931. In 1933 he recorded an excerpt from Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, which was subsequently awarded the Grand Prix du Disque. The following year in Paris he sang the cantata *L'Idylle funambulesque*, a work composed by his brother, Robert Planel. He took part in a variety of concert programmes as well as appearing as soloist with the Colonne and Pasdeloup orchestras. After the Second World War he was a guest in frequent broadcasts. In 1948 he himself composed a cantata: *Le Quatorzième chant d'Essaie*.

**CHARLES PANZÉRA** (1896–1976) was another notable singer of *mélodies* of this period. His career began in opera, as Albert in *Werther* in 1919 at the Opéra-Comique. Thereafter in the next few seasons he undertook a number of mostly supporting roles, though he was a successful interpreter of Debussy's *Pelléas*. In 1922 Fauré dedicated the song cycle *L'Horizon chimérique* to him. By 1923 in France he gave no less than seventy-two recitals in one year, as well as another fifty-two abroad. Though in these he mostly took part with his wife, Magdeleine Panzéra-Baillet, he also appeared with



Cortot and Nadia Boulanger. He became friendly with many leading composers of the time, including Honegger, Roussel, Milhaud and d'Indy. In 1924 *Le Monde musical* commended him: 'he is without doubt our finest Lieder singer and one can only imagine all the beauties of his collaboration with an artist such as Mme Panzéra'. His abbreviated recordings of *Pelléas* and *La Damnation de Faust* are *hors concours*.

Also a successful singer of French *chansons* was **PIERRE BERNAC** (1899–1979), whose repertory embraced works of Debussy, Ravel, Hahn and Poulenc. He made his first appearance in a concert in Paris in 1933. After 1934 he gave a variety of recitals with the composer Francis Poulenc and they undertook tours together throughout Europe and America. Poulenc composed a number of songs especially for Bernac. His records are among the most pleasant baritone offerings of this period. He was one of the last authoritative teachers of French style in modern times and he wrote a definitive text book: *The Interpretation of French Song*.

In marked contrast to so many French singers of this period **MARTIAL SINGHER** (1904–1990) had an extremely busy cosmopolitan career. He made his debut with the Paris Opéra, when the company was on tour in Amsterdam in 1930. He remained with them throughout the 1930's. He sang a prodigious variety of roles including Rigoletto, Iago, Amonasro, Hamlet, de Nevers in *Les Huguenots*, Telramund, Gunther, l'Evêque de Blois in Massenet's *Esclarmonde* and he created Bassanio in Hahn's *Le Marchand de Venise*, Maréchale Bazaine in Milhaud's *Maximilian* and Ascanio in Le Roucher's *La Duchesse de Padoue*. Between 1936 and 1943 he visited the Colón, Buenos Aires; there, among many other roles, he was the High Priest in Gluck's *Alceste*, which last part he also sang on his only visit to Covent Garden in 1937. With the outbreak of war he went to the United States and became an American citizen. He first appeared at the Metropolitan as Dappertutto in *Hoffmann* in 1943; later on, in 1946, he added Coppélius and Miracle. His other roles included Pelléas, though eventually he undertook Golaud, while he sang Figaro and the Count in adjacent performances. In his last seasons in the middle fifties he added the High Priest in *Samson et Dalila* and Scarpia. Throughout his career he was a successful song singer: Ravel dedicated to him one of the songs in his *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* (reproduced here).

Another baritone who made a conspicuous success of his career at the Opéra and Opéra-Comique and yet was also a reputable song singer was **ROGER BOURDIN** (1900–1973). His debut took place at the Opéra-Comique in 1922 as Albert in *Werther*. He sang a quantity of roles there during the next quarter of a century, among them creating Jupiter in Bertrand's *Amphytrion 38*, L'Horloge and Le Chat in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, L'Heureux in Bondeville's *Madame Bovary*, Cantegril in Ducasse's opera, Eloi in Samuel-Rousseau's *Le bon Roi Dagobert*, Pelléas and Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*. He made his first appearance at the Opéra in 1942, where he undertook Beckmesser, Le Prince de Metternich in Honegger and Ibert's *L'Aiglon* and Don Alvar in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*. He was also Scherasmin in the first performance of Weber's *Oberon* in Paris and he took the part of Bolivar in the world premiere of Milhaud's opera. He sang Pelléas at Covent Garden in 1930. He travelled elsewhere in France and at Monte-Carlo in 1949 he was Ourrias in *Mireille* and Athanaël in *Thaïs*. He was married to the soprano Geori Boué.

Undoubtedly the finest French baritone of this period was **ARTHUR ENDRÈZE** (1893–1975) and he was an American born in Chicago. He came to France by way of the American Academy at Fontainebleau; while there he took instruction from Jean de Reszke and began a career as a recitalist, which he continued throughout his life. He did not arrive at the Opéra until 1929, where he undertook a variety of roles, creating Guercoeur in Magnard's opera, le Conseiller Herzfeld in Milhaud's *Maximilian*, le Prince d'Antioche in Bachelet's *Un jardin sur l'Oronte*, Count Mosca in Sauguet's *La Chartreuse de Parme*; he was Créon in the first performances of Milhaud's *Medée* in Paris and there he repeated his Prince de Metternich five months after the world premiere of Honegger and Ibert's *L'Aiglon* in Monte-Carlo. His other roles included The High Priest in *Samson*, Athanaël in *Thaïs*, Hérode in *Hérodiade*, Hamlet, Don Jacintho in Lazzari's *La Tour de feu*, Pollux in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, Jacob in Méhul's *Joseph* and Capulet and then Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*. At the Opéra-Comique he was Karnac in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Sharpless, Germont, Scarpia, Hautecoeur in Bruneau's *Le Rêve* and Valentin in *Faust*. In 1932 at Monte-Carlo he also appeared in two other premieres: Alfano's *L'ultimo Lord* and Delmet's *L'Escarpolette*.



The debut of **ROBERT COUZINOU** (1888–1958) took place at the Opéra-Comique in 1912. The following year he began an association with the Opéra which lasted for as long as his career did. He took a variety of roles: Geywhir in d'Indy's *Fervaal*, the Herald in *Lohengrin*, Valentin, Maurevert in *Les Huguenots*, d'Arcourt in Hüe's *Le Miracle*, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Jonas in Paladilhe's *Patrie!*, Iago, Hamlet, Athanaël in *Thaïs*, Rigoletto, the Beggar in Saint-Saën's *Ascanio*, Beckmesser, Germont and Sharpless and sang in the Paris premieres of *L'Heure espagnol*, *Parsifal*, Massenet's *Grisélidis* and *Turandot*. At the beginning of the 1918 season he arrived at the Metropolitan, New York as the High Priest in *Samson* with Caruso and he returned the following year as Dog in Wolff's *L'Oiseau bleu*, but as so often happened when they had a surfeit of singers, eventually he was only engaged in the Sunday night concerts. He was better received at Covent Garden when he appeared there in 1919 as Kyoto in *Iris*, Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* (with Melba), Tonio and Scarpia. At Monte-Carlo in several seasons he sang in Lully's *Armide*, Le Rey's *Amphytrion* and Hahn's *Nausicaa*.

**ANDRÉ BALBON** (b1902) was a typical Opéra-Comique artist. He made his debut in 1928, as an Officer in Moret's *Lorenzaccio*. He created a great number of roles there including Sottencourt in Thiriet's *Le Bourgeois de falaise*, M. de Lustrac in Lavagne's *Esther de Carpentras*, le Cavalier noir in Delannoy's *Le Fou de la dame*, Aristide Girot in Lehár's *Frasquita* with Supervia, de Sottenville in d'Ollone's *Georges Dandin*, Ali in Hirschmann's *La Nuit embaumée* and many others. He also sang Gianni Schicchi, Vulcain in Gounod's *Philémon et Baucis*, Sharpless, Basilio in *Il barbiere*, Le Comte des Grieux in *Manon*, Lothario in *Alignon* and Colline in *La Bohème*, but he was principally a house singer and he took many small roles including Angelotti in *Tosca*, Bruhlmann in *Werther*, the Doctor in *La traviata*, Zuniga in *Carmen* and Le Bricoleur and Le Chiffonier in *Louise*.

**ANDRÉ PERNET** (1894–1966) was a typical French bass-baritone whose repertory ranged from Scarpia in *Tosca* and Nilakantha in *Lakmé* to Basilio in *Il barbiere* and Boris Godunov. He made his debut at Nice in 1921 and then came to the Opéra in 1928. There he sang a variety of roles including Athanaël in *Thaïs*, Wotan in *Die Walküre*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Gessler in *Guillaume Tell*, the King in *Aida*, St. Bris in *Les Huguenots*, King Mark, Narr'Havas in Reyer's *Salammbô* and Abimélech in *Samson*, L'Etranger in d'Indy's opera and Boris Godunov. He took various parts in the world premieres of a number of new works: the Messenger in Emmanuel's *Salamine*, the Monster in Ibert's *Persée et Andromède*, Jozon in Dumas's *Le Vision de Mona*, Shylock in Hahn's *Le Marchand de Venise* and Le Duc in Le Boucher's *La Duchesse de Padoue*. He appeared at the Opéra-Comique after 1931 as *Don Quichotte*, Nilakantha in *Lakmé*, Lothario in *Mignon*, Scarpia and the Father in *Louise*. He played the same part in a film version of *Louise* with Grace Moore and Georges Thill.

It is perhaps not so amazing as it may seem that **LUCIEN FUGÈRE** (1848–1935) should have still been singing and making gramophone records in the late 1920's. His was never a resplendent voice, but neither was it blown up in the artificial fashion of so many singers; what little of it there was he was always in charge of. He made his debut as long ago as 1870, when he sang a couple of *chansons* in a show at the Ba-ta-clan. After 1873 he moved to the Bouffes, where he took leading roles in a variety of long forgotten light works. It was not until 1877 that he joined the Opéra-Comique as Jean in Massé's *Les Noces de Jeanette* and began a reign there that lasted more than half a century. Periodically he sang elsewhere and made one visit to Covent Garden in 1897 as Leporello to Renaud's Don Giovanni. In 1910 at the Gaîté-Lyrique he was Sancho Panza in the first performance in Paris of Massenet's *Don Quichotte* with Vanni-Marcoux. It was as the Duc de Longueville in Messager's *La Basoche*, which he had sung at the premiere in 1890, that he sang for the last time at the Opéra-Comique in 1930.

**JEAN-EMIL VANNI-MARCOUX** (1877–1962) was a quintessentially typical singer of his times. His considerable intelligence and histrionic skill made him a picturesque Boris, Scarpia and Don Quichotte, but his singing was nevertheless without the brilliance of Plançon – not for him the dashing roulades of Thomas's Tambour-Major. His much admired recording of Philip's Monologue from Verdi's *Don Carlos* may suit our modern notions of understatement in characterisation, with its carefully measured articulation of the text, but the vocal dimensions have diminished; there is none of the sonority of tone or imaginatively nuanced legato that we can hear on Plançon's recordings. His debut took place in 1894 and until the First World War he sang mostly comprimario roles. After 1912 he began to appear regularly in Paris, Monte-Carlo and Chicago. Here he played a host of different parts including Boris Godunov, Basilio in *Il barbiere*, Golaud in *Pelléas* and he created



Séraphin Flambeau in Honegger and Ibert's *L'Aiglon*. In his later years he took part in occasional song recitals, but in these his sentiments were too dramatic – motivated more by the vast dimensions of the Opéra'. Eventually, after his retirement, he became Director of the Bordeaux Opera.

It seems appropriate to conclude our examination of French singing in these years with a brief mention of two who fall outside the general catalogue of artists, Reynaldo Hahn and **YVONNE PRINTEMPS** (1894–1977). A highly successful operetta star, she was only thirteen when she played Le petit Chaperon rouge at the Cigale. In 1914 at the Olympia she was in a musical entitled *Miousic* by Messager, Lecocq, Camille, Erlanger, Leroux, Hahn, Vidal, Hirschmann, Berger, Cuvillier and Redstone. In 1916 she married Sacha Guitry and thereafter appeared in a variety of his works at the Bouffes, Porte-St-Martin, Edouard VII and the Sarah-Bernhardt. In the twenties she travelled abroad and in London took part in *London* with Noël Coward in his *Operette*. In 1937, at the Salle Pleyel, Paris she gave an entertainment with works of a number of different composers, including Hahn and Auric. She took a leading role in the movie, *La Valse de Paris*.

Rossini, Schubert, Gounod, de Lara and **REYNALDO HAHN** (1875–1947) were none of them professional singers, yet they all delighted in singing (in Hahn's case smoking, too) to their own accompaniment. Today their songs are very differently done, with singer and pianist performing in the cold and formal atmosphere of modern concert halls music written, for the most part, for informal occasions. The apparent informality of Hahn's very spontaneous singing is supported by very refined musicianship. Although he never had a 'voice', he had studied singing and mastered the art: years of work produced the 'spontaneity'. He never bothered to inflate the tone or adopt an 'operatic' style – and so, although there is no golden tone, neither is there any faking. How welcome this truly refined art would be today, when most of our Lieder and *mélodie* singers have carefully built their voices up with a superstructure of pretentious mannerisms. His exquisite enunciation of French texts can be enjoyed in many acoustic and electrical recordings and in none more than the present example from our Offenbach operette!

## THE ANGLO-AMERICAN SCHOOL

John Charles Thomas, Leonard Warren and Sherrill Milnes notwithstanding, **LAWRENCE TIBBETT** (1896–1960) was the finest American baritone. He began singing at an early age, but it was not until the end of 1923 that he secured his first operatic engagement, at the Metropolitan, New York, as Levitsky in *Boris Godunov*. From thence it took him only a year until he entered the big time, as Ford in *Falslaff*. Thereafter his repertory embraced Ramiro in the American premiere of Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole*, Tonio, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Germont, Rigoletto, Scarpia, Iago, Simon Boccanegra, Wolfram and Melitone in *La forza del destino* – it was not until the end of his career that he sang Don Carlo. He replaced Ruffo as Neri in *La cena delle beffe* and Bohnen as Jonny in Křenek's *Jonny spielt auf*. In 1940 he was overtaken by a vocal crisis; his singing never fully recovered. Undoubtedly he did not spare himself; at the Met he had also created Badgar in Deems Taylor's *The King's Henchman*, Colónel Ibbetson in the same composer's *Peter Ibbetson*, Wrestling Bradford in Hanson's *The Merry Mount*, the Pasha in Seymour's *In the Pasha's Garden*, Guido in Hagemann's *Caponsacchi* and in 1937 on his only visit to Covent Garden he undertook the title-role in Goossens's *Don Juan de Mañara*, but it was probably Gruenberg's *The Emperor Jones* that proved the most exhausting. Indeed on more than one occasion he actually sang it with Tonio in *Pagliacci* at the same performance. As well as London he also appeared in Stockholm, Vienna, Budapest, Bologna, Rome, Chicago and San Francisco. He made a number of films including *The Rogue Song*, *New Moon*, *Cuban Love Song* and *Under Your Spell*. In the last years of his career, in 1951, he took part in Maugham's play *Rain*, in which there was no singing and then he succeeded Pinza in the Broadway production of *Fanny*. Our unpublished recording of Ford's monologue is truly historic.

Like Groh and Schmidt, though he was an American baritone, **JOHN CHARLES THOMAS** (1891–1960) made his reputation singing a quantity of non-operatic music, in his case hymns and ballads, as well as making a great many gramophone records. For the first ten years of his career he took part in a variety of operettas: de Koven's *Highwayman*, Lehár's *Stargazer*, Romberg's *Maytime*, Kreisler's *Apple Blossoms* and Schubert's (not, I suspect, Franz's) *Passing Show*. In 1922 he



went to Europe; while he was there he took some singing lessons from Jean de Reszke. He made his operatic debut with the Washington Opera in 1925, as Amonasro in *Aida*. The same year again in Europe he joined the company at the Monnaie, Brussels. In 1928 he sang at Covent Garden. His American career started in 1930 at San Francisco as Hérode. The same year he began an association with the Chicago Opera which lasted until 1942, there he sang Renato, Scarpia, Figaro in *Il barbiere*, Falstaff and Gale Corlyon in Leginska's *The Haunting*. He arrived at the Met in 1934 and stayed nine seasons. The rest of his career did not amount to much. He appeared with the Los Angeles Light Opera Company in the Schubert pasticcio *Blossom Time*, Strauss's *Gypsy Baron*, Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Straus's *The Chocolate Soldier* and *The Great Waltz*, presumably from the same source as the film and with music by Strauss. He continued to give recitals unabated and in 1950 he went to Australia.

The career of **DENNIS NOBLE** (1899–1966) began as a singer in picture palaces in the days of silent movies in the early twenties. Then he was Silvio in *Pagliacci* with the British National Opera Company at Covent Garden in 1923. He appeared there regularly until 1938, as Marcello in *La Bohème*, Achior in Goossens's *Judith*, Germont to Ponselle's Violetta, Amonasro, Tonio, Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Sam Weller in Coates's *Pickwick Papers*, Prince Igor in Borodin's opera, Lescaut in *Manon*, Rigoletto, José in Goossens's *Don Juan de Mañara*, Figaro in *Il barbiere*, Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Valentine in *Faust* and Swayne in Lloyd's *The Serf*. He also took part in a season held at Covent Garden in 1947, singing in *Carmen* and *Manon*. His recording career spanned early electrical EMI/Columbias (our example is one of the best Figaros in English, notwithstanding a slight hiccup with the words towards the end) and several fine LPs in the early 1950s.

The Australian **JOHN BROWNLEE** (1900–1969), a protégé of Melba, was Marcello in the third and fourth acts of *La Bohème* at her Covent Garden Farewell in 1926. His debut had taken place earlier that year in Paris, as Nilakantha in *Lakmé*. After 1927 at the Paris Opéra he undertook a variety of parts including Athanaël in *Thaïs*, Jokanaan in Strauss's *Salome*, Amonasro, l'Évêque de Blois in Massenet's *Esclarmonde*, Guillaume Tell, Germont, Tonio, Ashton in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the High Priest in *Samson*. At the Opéra-Comique he also sang Scarpia in *Tosca*, Karnac in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys* and Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. He appeared at Covent Garden five times between 1930 and 1949: as Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Golaud in *Pelléas*, Renato in *Un ballo*, Marcello, Figaro, Papageno in *Zauberflöte*, Rigoletto, the Count in *Figaro* and he created Koanga in Delius's opera in 1935. In 1931 at the Colón, Buenos Aires he was Alfio and Le Comte des Grieux in *Manon*. At Glyndebourne he took the part of Don Giovanni and then from 1937 for the next twenty years he moved to the Metropolitan, New York. During that time he gradually settled on a character repertory: he began with Escamillo, Lescaut in *Manon*, Sharpless, Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Ford in *Falstaff* and even Iago, then added the Husband in Menotti's *Amelia goes to the ball*, Kothner in *Die Meistersinger*, Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel*, until finally he was Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, the Father in *Louise*, Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* and Gianni Schicchi.

After the Second World War, British baritones like Peter Glossop and Thomas Allen began to emerge, who sounded exactly like their Italian contemporaries; they are even welcomed by Italian audiences. In this they lagged behind American baritones; Tibbett and Warren both sang in the Italian manner. The same could not be said of the previous generation of 'English' baritones; Dennis Noble and **HAROLD WILLIAMS** (1893–1976), whilst having had their voices trained in the correct classical – and therefore Italian – manner, yet sang with that unmistakable air of the English gentlemanly amateur. Williams was, though, an Australian, born in Sydney. He first appeared in London, at the Wigmore Hall, in a song recital in 1919. Throughout his career he was a well-known concert artist. He took part in the first performances in London of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Rachmaninov's *The Bells* and Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*. He had a brief and not very consequential operatic career. He was a member of the British National Opera Company in 1921, when he took the parts of Wolfram and Iago. He joined the Covent Garden International seasons in 1924, 1927 and 1937, but he undertook nothing bigger than Fernando in *Fidelio*. In 1936, again at Covent Garden, in the British Music Drama Festival he was Boris Godunov and in 1938 with the English Opera he sang Mephistopheles in Gounod's *Faust*. Though that wrote finis to his operatic career he continued singing concerts until after the Second World War.



One of the finest singers included here will be sought for in vain in the archives of newspapers, concert societies and opera houses. **PETER DAWSON** (1882–1961) reached out to one of the greatest audiences any singer ever commanded almost exclusively through the medium of the gramophone. A pupil of Santley, his recording career lasted from 1903 (cylinders) to 1960 (stereo LPs). In all of his records he gives a lesson and shows how a clear enunciation is not contrived by artful over-enunciation, but by a perfect reconciliation between the vowel which colours the tone and the consonant which articulates it. Everything is done naturally: speech is simply heightened into song, the words coloured by singing tone. His florid singing is a model, clear-cut, accurate and unfussy. But then, in Dawson's day this accomplishment was expected of any English singer who ventured a Handel aria, as a matter of course.

Whereas Dawson's records, all but one sung in English, were naturally sold only throughout the British Empire, those of **JOHN MCCORMACK** (1884–1945) sold like hot cakes in Italy, too. These records were souvenirs of a limited, but very distinguished operatic career that began in Italy in 1906. However, McCormack's great fortune came from the sales of his Irish ballad records especially, of course, in America, where most of them were made. When barely past thirty he began to lose the fresh silvery quality of the voice and the high notes became problematic. He left other tenors to imitate Caruso and evolved his own enchanting and compelling style, as the most Irish-sounding of singers. In his electric recordings we do not look for the round tone and portamento style of his earlier Italian arias; instead, we admire the wondrous diction and superb skill of the interpreter.

The impresario Colonel Mapleson describes in his memoirs being taken to hear some black singers in America a hundred years ago and he was very impressed by them. There had been quite a vogue for black singers even earlier; 'Black Malibran' and 'Black Patti' were two concert singers who attracted attention in Europe. At the turn of the century, Alice Gomez was one of the most refined and musical of concert artists in London. If Marian Anderson was the first black singer to reach the Met, pride of place as the first internationally acclaimed black concert artist must be given to **ROLAND HAYES** (1887–1976). Although he never sang in opera, his records include a quantity of spirituals and he recorded a number of operatic arias and Lieder by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and Wolf. He seems to have sung in concerts since he was a boy, but it was not until 1914, when he met Harry T. Burleigh, whose arrangements of many Negro spirituals are still played, that he first undertook his own recitals. These not only extended widely in the United States, but after 1920 he went on journeys throughout Europe, visiting Russia, Scandinavia, Italy, England and France. It was after a Paris recital in 1924 that the critic of *Le Monde musical* could not help noticing that the portrait on the cover of the programme was a photograph of a white marble bust of the singer!

Another light tenor who started singing lyric roles but eventually ended up a comprimario was **CHARLES KULLMAN** (1903–1982). In 1929 in Northampton, Massachusetts, he appeared in the first staged performance of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in America. From 1931 until 1934 he sang in Berlin, then Vienna and Salzburg. Here he was the Italian tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Da-ud in *Die Aegyptische Helena*, Huon in *Oberon*, Ferrando in *Costi fan tutte*, Belmonte in *Die Entführung* and Walther in *Die Meistersinger*. At Covent Garden he took part in three seasons after 1934. He joined the Metropolitan in 1935 and remained there until 1961. In that time he was Faust, Alfredo, Don José, Rodolfo, Erik, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Julien in *Louise*, Avito in *L'amore det tre re*, Hans in *The Bartered Bride*, Fenton, Almaviva, Turiddu, Belmonte in *Die Entführung*, Einsenstein and Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, then Shuisky in *Boris Godunov*, Herod in *Salome*, Golotsin in *Khovanschina* and, finally, Goro in *Butterfly*, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier* and the Emperor of Austria in *The Gypsy Baron*. He also sang in San Francisco: Cavaradossi, Alfredo, the Duke in *Rigoletto* and Porcus in Honegger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake*.

A typical English tenor of this period with an agreeable voice was **HEDDLE NASH** (1894–1961). His career was held up by the outbreak of the First World War and it was not until 1923 that he sang first with a marionette theatre, after which he commenced a period of study under Giuseppe Borgatti and then made his debut as Almaviva in *Il barbiere* at the Carcano, Milan in 1924. In the next five years he sang elsewhere in Italy and then appeared in England with the British National Opera Company. At length, in 1929, he was engaged at Covent Garden as Ottavio, in which 'his subtle style and lyrical tone' were much appreciated. He returned there fairly often until 1938, as David in *Die Meistersinger*, Rodolfo, Almaviva,



Pedrillo in *Die Entführung*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Pinkerton, Einsenstein and Faust, which he undertook only after the transformation scene. He was still singing there in 1947, as des Grieux in *Manon*.

**THOMAS BURKE** (1890–1968), like McCormack, studied in Italy. There he took some lessons from Fernando de Lucia and made his debut at the Lirico, Milan, as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, in 1917. The following year he was in Naples and then at the Massimo, Palermo where, as well as the Duke and Turiddu, he replaced Gigli as Flammen in Mascagni's *Lodoletta*. The critics having expatiated at some length on Gigli nevertheless found time to commend Burke. In 1919 he came to Covent Garden, appearing as Rodolfo opposite Melba. He then sang the Duke, Almaviva, a solitary Vladimir in *Prince Igor* and returned the following year as des Grieux in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* as well as taking the parts of Luigi in *Il tabarro* and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* in the London premiere of the *Trittico*. He appeared again at Covent Garden in 1927, the following year at Monte-Carlo and at the Opéra-Comique, where he was Cavaradossi.

Like John Charles Thomas, **RICHARD CROOKS** (1900–1972), though he did appear in opera, always remained more famous as a concert and radio-singer. He spent his early years as a church soloist, in 1922 he made his concert debut in New York under Walter Damrosch, then he went abroad taking part in several European tours, travelling to England, Belgium, Holland and Germany. In 1927 he was a soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Toscanini, then the following year under Mengelberg he took part in the first American performance of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. He made his operatic debut at Hamburg in 1928, as des Grieux in *Manon*, after which elsewhere in Germany he was Cavaradossi, Faust, Alfredo, Don José, Walther and Lohengrin. In 1930 came his first American appearance in opera in Philadelphia, as Cavaradossi. In 1933 he arrived at the Metropolitan, New York, remaining there for eleven seasons; to his repertory he now added Roméo, Pinkerton, Ottavio, Carlo in *Linda di Chamounix* and Wilhelm Meister in *Mignon*, after which he made concert tours in Australia and South Africa.

Today it is English singers who travel the world over. Even in Italy, once a land of song, at the Rossini Festival in Pesaro some of the principals and at least a part of the chorus and orchestra come from England. Even in the time of **WALTER WIDDOP** (1892–1949), English singers were not fashionable in England, yet his records show that he was quite as good as many of his German or Italian contemporaries. He made his first appearance at Covent Garden in January 1924 with the British National Opera Company as Siegfried. He remained with the company until it was finally wound up in 1929. At Covent Garden he also sang in the International Season of 1928, as Rinaldo in Gluck's *Armide*. The next year he returned as Bagaos in Goossens's *Judith* and Siegmund. In 1933 when he undertook Tristan *The Times* critic wrote the kind of review generally inflicted on English singers of that day: 'he sustained his great responsibilities in a manner worthy of the distinguished company he was keeping' and that included Henny Trundt – whoever *she* was – Olczewska, Janssen and Helgers. He was also Max in *Der Freischütz* and Canio in the English Opera Company seasons held in 1935 and 1938. He appeared frequently in concerts and took part in Mahler's Eighth Symphony and Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*. After the war, in 1948, he sang Aegisthus in Strauss's *Elektra*.

The bass **NORMAN ALLIN** (1884–1973) made his debut in 1909 in Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* at Ferndale, South Wales. His first stage appearance took place at the Aldwych, London, as the Aged Hebrew in *Samson and Delilah* in 1916. The following year, as the Rag Picker in *Louise*, he attracted Newman's attention: 'the part was sung with extraordinary directness of enunciation by Mr Allin with the result that the thread this character is meant to weave into the story stood out with unusual clearness'. From 1922 to 1929 he was a principal member of the British National Opera Company and he took part in a variety of roles, including Dosifey in *Khovanshchina*, Simon Glover in the British premiere of Bizet's *Fair Maid of Perth*, Osmin in *Die Entführung*, a Policeman in Dame Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate*, Khan Kontchak in *Prince Igor* and Sarastro. He appeared at Covent Garden in nine different seasons between 1926 and 1938, mostly in Wagnerian roles. He continued to sing in opera until 1949 at Glasgow with the Carl Rosa company when he was Basilio in *Il barbiere*. He was at Glyndebourne and made a tour of Australia. As a concert singer he appeared in *Messiah* more than two-hundred-and-seventy times, as well as being a soloist at practically every English choral festival and he even starred with George Robey at the London Palladium.



Anyone with a taste for divas, their trials, triumphs and tribulations, who has not read the memoirs of **MARGUERITE D'ALVAREZ** (1886–1953), entitled *Forsaken Altars* in England or *All the Bright Dreams* in the United States, has a treat in store. The description of the wedding of her parents in Peru, from the arrival there of her French mother, reads like a fairy tale – or an opera libretto. Her debut took place in Rouen in 1907 or 1908, as Dalila. After some performances of the Mother in *Louise* and *Carmen* and a brief visit to Algiers, she was engaged by Hammerstein for the Manhattan, New York. She appeared there in 1909, as Fidès in *Le Prophète*, Amneris, Azucena, Divonne in Massenet's *Sapho* and as his Hérodiade. The background to this engagement, of Hammerstein's infatuation with her, is set down in minute detail in her book. She was a member of his company in 1911 at the Stoll Theatre, London. There Klein thought highly of her Hérodiade: 'she proved to be an admirable actress and the possessor of a rich, warm and powerful voice. She had an enthusiastic reception'. In the next three years she sang Léonore in *La Favorite* in Marseilles, *Carmen* at La Scala and in Boston she increased her repertory with Carmela in *I gioielli della Madonna* and Laura in *La Gioconda*. She appeared at Covent Garden in 1914 as Amneris. After the war she took part only occasionally in opera, usually as Dalila or *Carmen*. She remained a concert singer into the 1930's. At the end of her life another career opened up and she took part in various movies, including *Pandora* and *the Flying Dutchman* with Ava Gardner and James Mason.

One of the most active concert singers of this time was **MADAME CHARLES CAHIER** (1870–1951). Originally Sarah Jane Walker, daughter of an American general, she was also known as Mrs Morris Black. She began her studies in Indianapolis and then went to France to Jean de Reszke. Her debut took place at Nice in 1904 as Orphée. In 1908 she created the solo part in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. For the next four years she was busy in Munich as Ganymed in Suppé's *Die schöne Galatea* as well as Fricka in *Das Rheingold*. She gave song recitals devoted to the works of Schumann and Liszt and was the contralto soloist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. In 1912 she returned to the United States, to the Metropolitan, where she was Azucena, Amneris and Fricka in *Die Walküre*. In New York in the twenties she appeared in the American premiere of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, as well as giving programmes devoted to the works of Levadé, Hahn, Laparra and Gabriel Dupont. She taught in Sweden, was the first to urge Melchior to change over from baritone to tenor, then later she moved to Salzburg and finally New York, where her pupils included Marian Anderson.

The debut of the contralto **MURIEL BRUNSKILL** (1899–1980) took place in 1920. She was a student of Blanche Marchesi. Her first appearance in opera took place in 1922 with the British National Opera Company at Covent Garden; with them she sang a variety of roles, including Emilia in *Otello* with Mullings and Erda to Austral's Brünnhilde and elsewhere in England she was Delilah and Amneris. She took this last role at the International Season at Covent Garden in 1933. Throughout the rest of that decade she sang on tour in Europe, Australia and the United States and Canada. After the Second World War she was in films, an American musical and Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

In 1920 after an interval of more than twenty-five years **CLARA BUTT** (1872–1936) reappeared in opera and sang Orphée again at Covent Garden under Beecham. It was not a happy partnership. She was too old to follow the dictates of any conductor – a young tyro at that – no matter how gifted. Inevitably she went her way and he his, with *Orphée* disappearing somewhere between the two. During the twenties her voice began to show unmistakable signs of wear. Increasingly she spent more time on tour in the Empire. Once she even went to Japan; after all they had fought on our side. For the occasion, she learned, in the original, a Japanese song, 'Chinkoro-Koinu' ('Pretty little doggy'). What must her audiences have made of it? The great Dame (she stood more than six feet) towering over them, in a sheath dress covered in sequins, glittering like some huge mackerel as she parroted a language not one word of which she could speak!

'The only singer I ever heard in the flesh whose voice possessed similarly contrasting timbres to Clara Butt was the great Afro-American contralto, **MARIAN ANDERSON** (1902–1993).' Her career began in 1925, when she gave a recital and by 1930 she was already undertaking European tours. She sang widely on many different occasions in France, Germany, Scandinavia and Austria, where she was a soloist at the Salzburg Festival. In America, however, she met with some resistance and even in 1939, when she wished to give a concert at Washington, she was refused the use of Constitution Hall, so she gave an open-air recital at which vast crowds attended and further resistance looked absurd. In 1955 she made a token appearance at the Metropolitan, as Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera*.



The career of **SUSAN METCALFE-CASALS** (1878–1959) was a matter of fits and starts. We first hear of her in a recital in New York in 1903, when her programme ranged through ‘a great variety of songs by old Italians, Bach, Mozart, Reichardt, Rameau, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Grieg, Saint Saëns and Brahms’. She remained busy in the first decade of this century at home and abroad. In 1907 Aldrich wrote that ‘she has acquired the habit of forcing her voice (and) she is unable to strike exactly the pitch but sings sharp’. But when she returned with her husband the ‘cellist Pablo Casals, in 1916, she was commended ‘for a surer control of her voice and less attempt to gain power at the expense of pure intonation’. Although she sang as late as 1950, her appearances were infrequent and her only recordings were privately made in 1937.

Although **GRACE MOORE** (1901–1947) was a pupil of Marafioti in New York, it was not until after she had spent a period working in operettas and revues that she first went abroad to Paris, where she took instruction from Richard Barthélemy, a well-known song composer of the time. Her operatic career began at the Metropolitan, New York in 1928, as Mimì. She remained with the company until the time of her untimely death in a plane crash in Denmark. Her repertory was not big; she sang Mimì, Juliette, Manon, Marguerite in *Faust*, Louise, Tosca and Fiora in Montemezzi’s *L’amore dei tre re* and he conducted it for her. She also appeared at the Opéra-Comique, Paris after 1928 and at Covent Garden in 1935. Her highly successful movies included *One Night of Love* and *Louise*. The enormous popular reputation she made from these caused her to be never properly appreciated by serious critics, for she was a good singer in opera and in recitals, in which she frequently appeared.

Like Grace Moore **GLADYS SWARTHOUT** (1904–1969) made a number of popular musical films. Her debut took place in 1924, when she sang the Shepherd Boy in *Tosca* at Chicago. The following year she appeared at Ravinia Park as Carmen, but it was not until she arrived at the Metropolitan that she established herself, singing La Cieca in *La Gioconda* in 1929. She returned fairly often until 1945 in a variety of lyrical parts: Mallika in *Lakmé*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Pierotto in *Linda di Chamounix*, Stephano in *Roméo et Juliette*, Preziosilla in *La forza del destino*, Plentiful Tewke in Hanson’s *The Merry Mount*, but her Carmen, Virgil Thomson thought, ‘had never left the country club’. Throughout her career she was busy as a recitalist.

**INA SOUEZ** (1908–1992) is still quite well known today, mostly as a result of her Glyndebourne recordings. She was an American by birth and after the fashion of an earlier day, she went abroad to make her reputation. Her debut took place in Italy, at Ivrea, as Mimì in 1928. In 1929 she sang Liù at Covent Garden and she came again in 1935, as Micaela in *Carmen* with Supervia. From 1934 and for the next five years she appeared regularly at Glyndebourne, where she was Donna Anna and Fiordiligi and, after the Second World War, she repeated Fiordiligi with the New York City Center Opera. Sometime later she starred with Spike Jones’s City Slickers – and there was nothing especially novel about this: another American soprano, Anna Fitziù, spent the last years of her career touring with Kryl’s Band. Her “Si, mi chiamano Mimì” makes an interesting comparison with Grace Moore’s version.

The career of **MAGGIE TEYTE** (1888–1976) seems to have fallen into three periods. In the first, from the time of her debut in 1906 in a Mozart concert with Lilli Lehmann, Mario Ancona and Edouard de Reszke, she was busy in opera in London, Paris, Monte-Carlo, Berlin, Parma, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia in a variety of different works, including Glycère in the brothers Hillemachers’ *Circé*, Rhodis in Erlanger’s *Aphrodite*, Nuri in d’Albert’s *Tiefland*, Lygie in Nougés’s *Quo Vadis?*, Dot in Sir Alexander Mackenzie’s *The Cricket on the Hearth*, Hansel and Cendrillon in Massenet’s opera as well as many of the better-known French and Italian roles. In her second period, following the First World War and until 1935, she sang in opera mainly in England (in English), in musical comedies like *Monsieur Beaucaire*, *The Little Dutch Girl*, *By Appointment* and *Tantivy Towers*, as well as in variety and vaudeville. It was not until she made recordings of Debussy songs with Alfred Cortot that the third part of her career commenced. In this her recordings played a great part; she became a successful recitalist in Great Britain and the United States in the works of Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Duparc, Chausson and Hahn. She made her final appearance in a recital at the Wigmore Hall, London in 1955.

A Scots soprano who only rarely appeared in opera – she was Marguerite in *Faust* and the Happy Spirit in Gluck’s *Orfeo* – was **ISOBEL BAILLIE** (1895–1983). She first sang in 1923 in a concert in Manchester with the Hallé Orchestra under Sir



Hamilton Harty. Thereafter she remained a principal oratorio and concert singer until after the Second World War. She took part in countless performances of *Messiah*. Henry Wood wrote of her: 'success has never turned her head nor caused her to become lazy or self-satisfied, in all my work with her I have never found her anything but note perfect'. She was also a soloist in Brahms' Requiem and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony when Toscanini came to London in 1937.

**DORA LABBETTE** (1898–1984) began her career after the First World War as a concert artist and it was not until after she had sung with Beecham in *Messiah* that he encouraged her to take up an operatic career. She did this by adopting a *nom de guerre*, Lisa Perli, when she appeared as Mimì at Covent Garden under Beecham in 1935. She returned there the following year as Mélisande and she also took this part at Vichy and Bordeaux. In 1937 she sang Mimì and Mignon on guest visits to Berlin, Munich and Dresden. She made a reputation as a singer of Delius's music, taking part in the premiere of his *Idyll* in 1933. She also took the role of Vrenchen in his *Village Romeo and Juliet* in its first broadcast and appeared at the Delius Festival in 1929 in a song recital with Beecham at the piano.

**JOAN CROSS** (1900–1993) played the violin in the first performance of Holst's *St. Paul's Suite* in 1913, when she was still a pupil at St. Paul's School, London. She joined the Old Vic chorus in 1924, gradually coming to sing parts like Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Cherubino and Aida. In 1934 she appeared at Covent Garden as Desdemona to Melchior's *Otello* and the following year she was Micaela to Supervia's *Carmen*. But it was not until she became a Director of the Sadler's Wells company during the Second World War that she became more widely known. In 1945 she began her association with Britten, creating Ellen Orford in the world premiere of *Peter Grimes* at Sadler's Wells, after which she was the first Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Glyndebourne in 1946, Lady Billows in *Albert Herring* there the following year, Queen Elizabeth in *Gloriana* at Covent Garden in 1953 and Mrs Grose in *The Turn of the Screw* at the Fenice, Venice in 1954.

There is about the career of **FLORENCE EASTON** (1882–1955) a strong sense of personality at work. She has a good voice of sizeable but not remarkable proportions, the tone is pure and steady and forward on the breath, the words are all clear and made to tell without any unnecessary exaggerations. At the Metropolitan, where she first appeared in 1917, she was a leading singer through the next thirteen years, during which time the company included a veritable clutch of great names including Ponselle, Muzio, Alda, Farrar, Destinn, Bori, Galli-Curci, Rethberg and Jeritza. She could hardly hope to equal one, never mind all of them, but yet she accomplished – and that is precisely the word – practically all their repertory: Sélika in *L'Africaine*, Bertha in *Le Prophète*, Rezia in *Oberon*, Rachel in *La Juive*, Fiora in *L'amore dei tre re*, Margherita and Elena in *Meisfotele*, Gioconda, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Tosca, Dulcinée in *Don Quichotte*, the Marschallin, Butterfly, Lodoletta, Carmen and even Turandot, not to mention Kundry, Isolde and the Brünnhildes in *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, which none of them would have risked. When she left in 1935 she continued to make regular appearances in concert and occasionally in opera, usually Wagner and often in her own translations. The last of these was a broadcast of Isolde, which she made a few months before her sixtieth birthday.

**ROSA PONSELLE** (1897–1981) made her career in America, with three brief summer seasons at Covent Garden and one at the Florence Festival. Despite this curious and interesting limitation of her activities, she is still today one of the most famous of all singers; this, of course, is due to her gramophone records. She made her debut at the Metropolitan in the first week of the 1918/19 season, as Leonora in *La forza del destino* with Caruso, after which she appeared in a variety of other works. The Metropolitan mounted two revivals especially for her: *La vestale* in 1925, which was a 'rehearsal' for *Norma* in 1927. She repeated *Norma* two years later in London; she was thirty-two and at the peak of her career, all her most famous operatic records already made. *Norma* taxed her and she resorted to liberal transpositions – she herself did not like her Victor record of 'Casta diva' – but as *La vestale* she was perfectly cast. Her magnificent legato impressed the Italians as much as it had Lawrence Gilman: 'here was a singer who could sing Spontini's long, gravely sculptured melodies with the required sense of line and dignity of style and with the formal and somewhat stilted pathos that is their quaint and special mark'. In 1930 she undertook her first Violetta at Covent Garden. After Luisa Miller and Donna Anna (again with liberal transpositions) she attempted *Carmen* in 1935. We can hear from a quantity of broadcasts she made in the 1930's that she avoided the more taxing high lying arias, preferring vocally ambiguous pieces from *Carmen*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, Tchaikovsky's *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Semiramide* (as written) even *Samson et Dalila*, as well as less ambitious music from *Adriana*



*Lecouvreur* and *Otello*. Her voice was more comfortable in the lower range and the chest register came to be of compelling size and power. Of the natural quality of the voice there can be no two opinions; it is one of the finest on records.

The Australian soprano **MARJORIE LAWRENCE** (1909–1978) is probably best remembered today for her fight against poliomyelitis and for a film about her life, *Interrupted Melody*, though the voice in it was Eileen Farrell's. After coming to Europe to complete her studies she made her first appearance at Monte-Carlo in 1932, as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. The same season there she sang Salomé in the third act of *Hérodiade* and she was also in Delmet's *L'Escarpolette*. She arrived at the Paris Opéra in 1933, as Ortrud in *Lohengrin*. She returned during the next three years as Salomé in *Hérodiade*, Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, Rachel in *La Juive*, Aida, Brangaene, Donna Anna, Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung*, Valentine in *Les Huguenots* and she created Keltis in the world premiere of de Malaret's *Vercingetorix*. Her Metropolitan debut took place in 1935, as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, after which she was Ortrud, Rachel, Strauss's Salome, Alceste and the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde. She came to Chicago three times after 1935 and there added Carmen to her repertory. It was in Mexico City in 1941 that she contracted polio. For some years she was unable to continue her career; then, bit by bit, she re-established herself, singing concerts and eventually appearing again at the Metropolitan as Venus in *Tannhäuser* and Isolde – in these operas she was able to sit throughout the performances. It was not until some years had passed that she managed a concert performance of *Elektra* standing throughout.

At the time of writing (1984) Maria Ivogün was the oldest important singer still living; **EVA TURNER** (1892–1990) came next. Her career took her to La Scala, Milan, the San Carlo, Naples, Chicago and the Colón, Buenos Aires, as well as Covent Garden. In this respect at least she was unique, for before the last war no English opera singer enjoyed such a wide international career. She was a pupil of Dan Rootham, who had also been a teacher of Clara Butt. She went to the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1911; the principal then was Sir Alexander Mackenzie and she sang in the chorus of his opera, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, based on Charles Reid's novel, as long ago as 1914. Her first engagement was with the Carl Rosa company and she began with small roles: a Page in *Tannhäuser*, the Priestess in *Aida* and one of the Genii in *The Magic Flute*. With the Carl Rosa she made her first appearance at Covent Garden in 1920 as Santuzza; in the course of the next three seasons she was singing Tosca, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Aida, Eva and Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Her international career began at La Scala in 1924, as Freia in *Das Rheingold* and then came Sieglinde. Until the outbreak of the Second World War she returned often to Italy: to Genoa, Trieste, Brescia, Turin, Pisa, Verona, Florence and Bologna, as well as Milan and Naples. She also undertook Aida, Gioconda, Leonora in *Fidelio* and *La forza*, Isabeau in Mascagni's opera, Wally in Catalani's opera, Donna Anna, Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* and Turandot. This last role became her calling card: she sang it all over Italy and at Covent Garden, when she sang there in the International Season in 1928. Meanwhile, in 1927, she had visited the Colón and in 1928 made the first of three visits to Chicago.

Australia is renowned for the many famous sopranos it has produced. Melba and Sutherland are only the two greatest names; in third place we should put **FLORENCE AUSTRAL** (1894–1968). Her career began in Sydney when she undertook the part of Leonora in some scenes from Beethoven's *Fidelio*. At length she departed for New York and became a pupil of Gabrielle Sibella. She made her first stage appearance at Covent Garden in 1922, as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* with the British National Opera Company. During the next two years she progressed through the other Brünnhildes, Aida and eventually Isolde. In 1924, in the International Season, she sang Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. In New York in 1927 she sang in a concert version of *Götterdämmerung* and Bach's *Mass in B Minor*. On her reappearance in London, at the Queen's Hall, she showed that she had developed as a Lieder singer. It was at this time that she began to suffer from arterio sclerosis and her operatic performances became less frequent. In the 1930's she undertook recitals in England and travelled abroad to the United States and Australia. Even in 1934 in Australia she took a variety of parts in opera, including Aida, Tosca, Brünnhilde, Senta, Isolde and, surprisingly, Leila in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. At this time in a concert she sang the *Lucia* Mad Scene and received an ovation 'for the unusual warmth and richness of the runs and the cadenza with the flute which were executed with flexibility and effortless ease, a remarkable accomplishment for a dramatic soprano'. In 1937 she returned to London again and after a Wigmore Hall recital sang in opera at Sadler's Wells. Her final London appearance took place in 1940, in a performance of Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*.



## THE EAST EUROPEAN/ SLAVIC SCHOOL

The Czechoslovakian soprano **JARMILA NOVOTNÁ** (1907-1994) was a beauty with an attractive lyric soprano. At the beginning, in 1924, she appeared as Rosina and Violetta in a provincial Czech theatre. The next year she arrived in Prague, where she was Marenka in the *Bartered Bride*, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, Aenchen in *Der Freischütz*, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, Ariel in Fibich's *The Tempest*, Karolina in Smetana's *The Two Widows* and Dvořák's *Russalka*, as well as the Queen of the Night and Rosina. After a visit to Italy, in 1929 she made her Berlin debut as Concepción in Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole*. Here, though she still undertook an occasional *coloratura* role, her biggest successes came with the lyric repertory: Mimì, Butterfly, Cherubino and Manon Lescaut and she also sang in Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand* and Křenek's *Das leben des Orest*. In 1933 she moved to Vienna and created Léhar's Giuditta with Tauber at the State Opera. Here her repertory included Violetta, Octavian, Eurydice, Fiordiligi, Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta in *Hoffmann*, Frasquita in Wolf's *Der Corregidor*, Cherubino or the Countess in *Figaro*, Butterfly, Pamina and Orlofsky. Eventually, in 1940, she arrived at the Metropolitan, New York, where she remained until 1956, repeating many of the roles she had already undertaken. She made a visit to the Colón, Buenos Aires, in 1936 and she took the lead in a number of films made in Germany, France and the United States, including *The Great Caruso*, in which she seems to have played Melba!

**NATHALIE VECHOR** (1903–1986) was from the next generation after Slobodskaya (q.v.) and did not begin her career until after the Russian revolution. After some while spent studying the piano, she commenced singing operetta. In 1931 she appeared with Beecham's company at the Lyceum Theatre, London, in which Chaliapin was the leading singer. She sang a variety of different roles in Russian opera in France, Spain and England, including Marfa in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar's Bride*, Olga in Dargomizhsky's *Russalka*, as well as appearing in *Prince Igor*, *Sadko*, *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*. She took part in concerts in Switzerland, the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies; in these her repertory included mostly French music and she also sang in Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*. She then taught in France.

The soprano **ADA NORDENOVA** (1891–1973) was a student at Pilsen and studied with Klara Kaspar. She made her debut there in 1913 and remained with the company until after the First World War. With the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1920 she moved to Ostrava. Then in 1924 she became a principal in Prague. She stayed there until 1942.

Like so many Russian singers of this period the operatic career of **MARIA KURENKO** (1890–1980) was brought to a sudden halt after the revolution and never really got going again. She was a pupil of Umberto Masetti, the teacher of Nezhdanova and Stracciari. Her debut took place at Kharkov as Antonida in Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* in 1916. By 1918 she was at the Bolshoi, Moscow, but after 1920 she left Russia. She appeared in opera in Riga and then travelled to the United States and after 1925 she took part in regular concert tours. In 1927 she sang one performance of Rosina at Chicago and in 1936 one performance of Antonida at the Lewisohn Stadium, New York. At one time or another she undertook Manon, Tatiana and Mimì.

The Russian soprano **XENIA BELMAS** (1889–1981) was one of the many singers who eventually left their native country at the time of the revolution. She made her first appearance in 1917 at Odessa and sang a number of Wagnerian roles as well as Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*. She left Russia in 1921 and came to Wiesbaden. After touring in concerts for some years she sang Aida at the Paris Opéra in 1926. In 1929 she went to Australia and took part in an opera tour. After some concerts in Monte-Carlo and the Baltic States eventually she settled at Durban in South Africa in 1938.

Like Marcella Sembrich, who had been a student of the younger Lamperti in Milan, **ADA SARI** (1886–1968) was a Polish 'coloratura' whose career began in Italy. She made her debut in Rome in 1909, as Marguerite in *Faust*. Thereafter she became a busy second-rate singer, appearing in Brescia, Venice, Trieste, Lucca and Parma through the next ten years in a variety of different parts including Nedda in *I pagliacci*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Philine in *Mignon*, Sophie in *Werther*, Rosina, Lucia, Mimì, Adina, Norina and in 1923 she ventured as far as La Scala, in three performances as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* under Toscanini. In the later 1920's and into the 1930's she appeared in Poland, where she sang roles like Gilda, Thaïs and Tamara in Rubinstein's *The Demon*.



For years **ODA SLOBODSKAYA** (1888–1970) was a recognisable figure at London musical events. She studied at St. Petersburg and made her debut at Petrograd, as it had become, in 1917, as Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*. She remained in Russia during the next five years undertaking parts from Marguerite in *Faust* to Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. In 1922 she came to the Paris Opéra, as Parasha in Stravinsky's *Mavra*, but it was not until 1926 that she left Russia for good. In 1931 she took part in a season of Russian opera given at the Lyceum, London with Chaliapin and conducted by Beecham. The following year at Covent Garden she was Venus in *Tannhäuser*. She visited La Scala in 1933 as Fevronia in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*. In 1935 at Covent Garden again she created Palmyra in the world premiere of Delius's *Koanga*. She repeated Fevronia and was also Tsarina Militrissa in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar Saltan* and Marina in *Boris Godunov* in 1936 at the Colón, Buenos Aires. In 1941 in London, where she eventually settled, she appeared as Parassia in Mussorgsky's *Sorotchinsky Fair*. Throughout the later part of her career and until the 1960's she took part in orchestral concerts and recitals. She made a few records for HMV in 1931, whilst in her prime; her subsequent records, although fascinating, were made late in her career.

The Czech contralto **MARTA KRASOVÁ** (1901–1970) studied in Vienna as well as Prague. Her debut took place in 1924 at Pressburg, now Bratislava, as Julia in Dvořák's *The Jacobin*. After 1927 she came to Prague where she remained for the next forty years, during which time she visited Vienna, Munich, Dresden, Paris and Berlin. In 1937 she undertook a tour of the United States singing largely a Wagnerian repertory. She appeared at the Edinburgh Festival as late as 1964. She sang in a variety of operas including Dvořák's *Russalka*, Janáček's *Jenůfa* and Smetana's *The Kiss*, as well as Verdi's *Aida* and *Don Carlo* and *Carmen*.

The Hungarian contralto **MARIA BASILIDES** (1886–1946) was a student at the Academy of Music in Budapest before making her debut in 1911 in operetta at Budapest. In 1915 she moved up to the Budapest National Opera and thereafter appeared in Berlin, Dresden and Munich. In the later part of her career she became a successful concert singer. She recorded a superb series of Bartók and Kodály folk songs and arrangements with Bartók at the piano, one of which we reproduce here.

An excellent Russian bass who, like Chaliapin, went on singing into his sixties, was **MARK REIZEN** (1895–1992). His career started at Kharkov in 1921 as Pimen in *Boris Godunov*. For the next four years he took a variety of parts including Tsurin in the *Queen of Spades*, Abimelech in *Samson et Dalila*, the King and Ramfis in *Aida*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Angelotti, Nilakantha, St. Bris in *Les Huguenots* and Méphistophélès in *Faust*. In 1925 he arrived in Leningrad, where he stayed until 1930, when he moved to the Bolshoi, Moscow and remained there for the rest of his career. He sang Russlan and Farlaf in Glinka's *Russlan and Ludmilla*, Dosifey in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, Ivan the Terrible in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Maid of Pskov*, the Viking Guest in *Sadko*, Susanin in Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, Salieri in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri*, Holofernes in Serov's *Judith*, the Miller in *Rusalka*, Galitzky and Kontchak in *Prince Igor* and *Boris Godunov*. In 1930 he appeared at Monte-Carlo, as Mefistofele and Babilio in *Barbiere*. He took part in opera performances in Paris, Dresden, Berlin and Budapest. His career continued well after the last war and he made a number of films. The present recording is all that remains of a 1929 test session, where Albert Coates obviously tried to persuade HMV (unsuccessfully) to contract the young Russian bass.

The greatest singers of the past may not necessarily have had more beautiful voices than singers today, but their art is certainly more eloquent. Of them all, perhaps **FEODOR CHALIAPIN** (1873–1938) was the most remarkable. A record of him speaking verse is easily identifiable, though he does not sing a note. We are not surprised that in his day he should have been considered a unique actor; there may have been other singers whose voices are more impressive (not many, though), but there is certainly no other whose art was so spontaneous and therefore so musical. After 1921 when he finally left Russia, Chaliapin's career took him to all the world's leading opera houses: to the Metropolitan, La Scala, the Opéra and Opéra-Comique, Covent Garden, the Colón, Buenos Aires and Monte-Carlo, where he sang Boris in 1937, only a year before his death. He undertook concert tours as far afield as Japan and he made gramophone records there as late as 1936. He appeared in silent films and in Pabst's *Don Quixote* (nothing to do with Massenet). Of all the singers we have considered here his career was perfectly in proportion to his talents.



The Hungarian baritone **IMRY PALLÓ** (1891–1978) studied in Budapest under Josef Sik, first the bass and later the baritone repertory and then went to Milan to work with Sammarco. In 1917 he began his career, which lasted forty-five years until 1962, at the Budapest National Opera. His repertory included many leading Italian baritone parts: Rigoletto, Simon Boccanegra, di Luna, Germont, Falstaff and he appeared in a number of Hungarian works, creating Hány János in Kodály's opera in 1926.

**VLADIMIR ROSING** (1890–1963) took some lessons from Tartakov in St. Petersburg and then appeared in a concert in 1910 with a child prodigy, Heifetz, who was only nine years old. He went again for tuition, this time to Jean de Reszke and Sbriglia, before making his operatic debut at St. Petersburg in 1912 as Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*. In 1913 he moved to London and during the war directed a season of Russian opera at the Stoll Theatre. In 1921 he came to Covent Garden as Cavaradossi in an English performance of *Tosca* with the Carl Rosa company. For a time thereafter he was busy in the United States at the Eastman School of Music. He was back in England in 1936, when he set himself up as a champion of opera in English with Albert Coates (born in St. Petersburg) – 'it must be acted as well as sung' – in the British Music Drama Season at Covent Garden. In 1938 he produced *Faust* for the English Opera Society, but the critics were unimpressed by his 'psychological lighting with its sudden fussy transitions, even when it worked perfectly'; he seems to have been more successful with George Lloyd's *The Serf*. At the outbreak of the Second World War he went again to America, this time occupying himself as a voice teacher.

Unlike many of the other Russian singers included here the career of **SERGEI LEMESHEV** (1902–1977) took place entirely in the Soviet Union. He studied singing under Raiskii and made his first appearance in Moscow in 1920, as Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, though his official debut did not take place for another six years at Sverdlovsk. He remained there and at Tbilis, until 1931, the year he returned to Moscow. Thereafter he was a leading tenor for the next twenty years at the Bolshoi. During that time he sang elsewhere in Russia and also took part in many concerts. His repertory included the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Alfredo in *Traviata* and Roméo in Gounod's opera and he also sang in Dargomizhsky's *Rusalka*, Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night* and *The Tzar's Bride* and Rachmaninov's *Aleko*.

Back cover photo: Tito Schipa as Des Grieux in Massenet's *Manon*.

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